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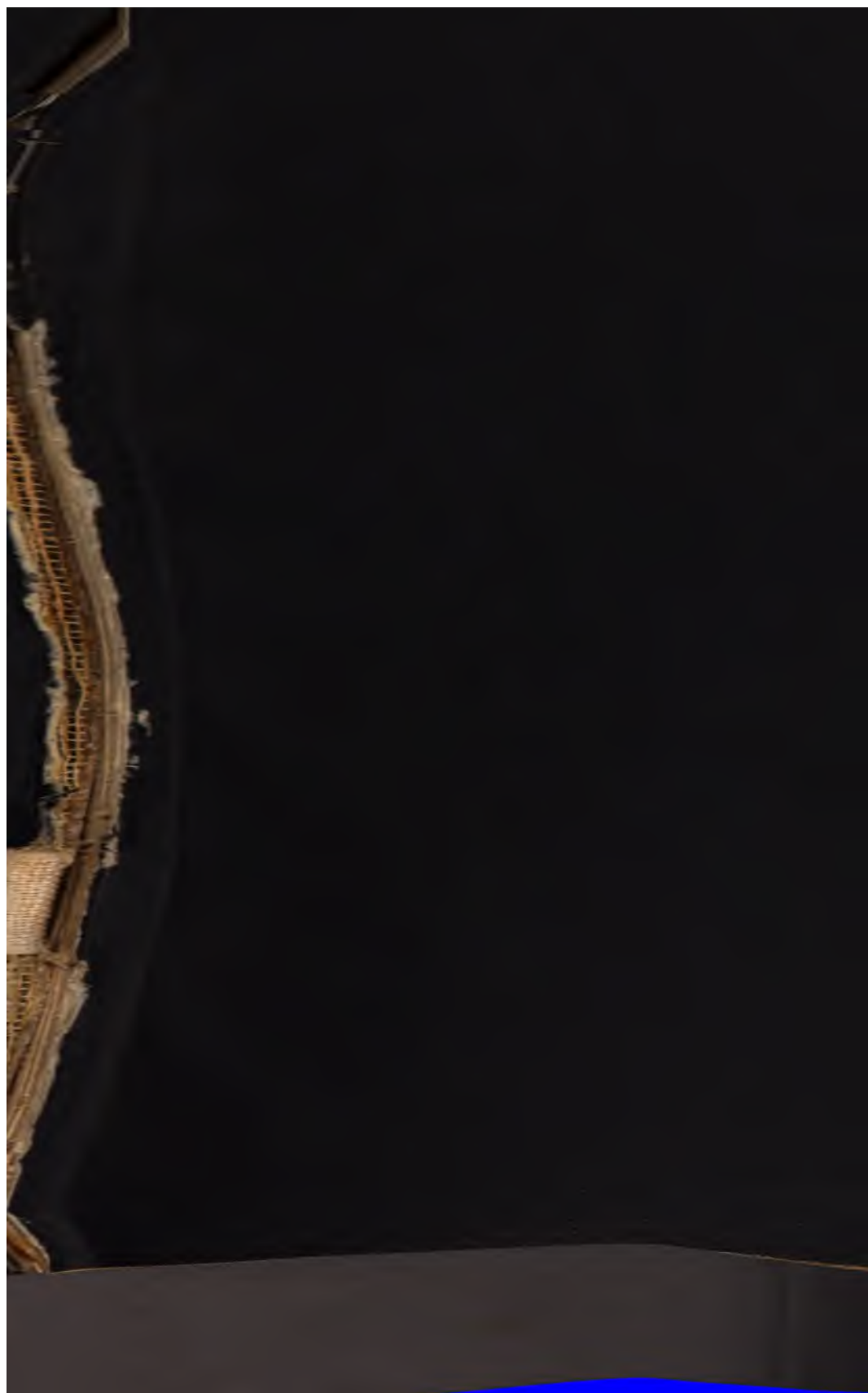
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SKETCHES
LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL

Edinburgh: Printed by Thomas and Archibald Constable,

FOR

DAVID DOUGLAS.

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SKETCHES
LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL

BEING SELECTIONS.
FROM AN UNPUBLISHED MS. OF THE LATE

REV. GEORGE GILFILLAN
DUNDEE

EDITED BY
FRANK HENDERSON, M.P.



EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS
1881

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PREFATORY NOTE.

AMONG the MSS. left by the late Mr. Gilfillan, there was one, consisting of seven complete books, ready for publication, and entitled, "Reconciliation, a Life History." It was Mr. Gilfillan's intention to publish this MS. in the form in which it has been handed to me, and I have no doubt that had he lived a short time longer, it would have been so published. Its existence, and the general design of the work, were well known to many of his friends and correspondents, and this fact, together with the assurance I possessed of his own intentions regarding it, led me to the conclusion that I ought not to entirely withhold its publication. Mr. Gilfillan evidently intended it as a sequel to his "History of a Man," and to give his opinions on more recent literary, philosophical, and especially theological questions. As in the earlier work, the narrative and biographical portions of "Reconciliation" are more or less ficti-

tious, and serve mainly to give a kind of sequence, or connection, to short disquisitions on a great variety of subjects, which constitute the real value of the work. After much consideration and consultation with others, I resolved to omit entirely the narrative and biographical portions from the present publication, and, however unconnected and disjointed they might appear, to give only such Selections as seemed to be of interest and value.

I have endeavoured to exclude all matter already published by Mr. Gilfillan ; but he was so frequently before the public, either on the platform, or through the press, that it is quite possible I may have failed, and that, here and there, a paragraph may be met with which has already appeared. This, in the circumstances, it was all but impossible to avoid.

F. H.

LONDON, *May* 1881.

CONTENTS.

I. CRITICAL—	PAGE
Coleridge,	1
Walter Savage Landor,	5
Edward Irving,	10
Dr. Chalmers,	13
Thomas Carlyle,	17
Ralph Waldo Emerson,	25
De Quincey,	29
Edmund Burke,	37
Coleridge on Thomas Campbell,	41
Hobbes and Leibnitz,	46
Macaulay's Jottings—Warburton,	46
Dr. Knox,	49
P. J. Bailey—"Festus,"	51
Dr. Samuel Brown,	52
Sydney Dobell,	53
Alexander Smith,	54
J. Stanyon Bigg and T. Davidson of Jedburgh,	56
Thomas Aird,	57
Byron's "Manfred" and Marlowe's "Faustus,"	57
Shakespeare's "Othello,"	60
Do. "Macbeth,"	62
Do. "Lear,"	68

I. CRITICAL— <i>continued.</i>	PAGE
Shakespeare's "Cymbeline,"	69
Do. "Venus and Adonis,"	70
The Passions of Great Men,	70
Notes on Shelley,	72
Notes on Byron's Life and Letters,	75
Professor Wilson,	77
Sir Walter Scott compared with Lytton, Hugo, and Thackeray,	79
Cervantes' "Don Quixote,"	82
Tennyson—"In Memoriam,"	83
Robert Browning,	85
J. Ruskin,	87
Samuel Brown—Faraday,	88
Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter" and Irving's "Tales of a Traveller,"	91
Mrs. E. B. Browning,	93
George Beattie,	94
"Robinson Crusoe"—"Vicar of Wakefield"— The Queen's "Journal in the Highlands,"	96
Notes on Napoleon's "Life of Cæsar,"	99
„ German Writers,	100
Spinoza,	115
Notes on Renan's "Life of Jesus,"	121
„ Colenso's "Pentateuch,"	128
„ Sir Charles Lyell's "Antiquity of Man,"	138
„ Butler's "Analogy,"	142
„ Newman's "Apologia,"	143
Miss Cobbe's "Broken Lights,"	146
H. L. Mansel and the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment,	148
Notes on Miss Hennell's "Early Christian,"	154

CONTENTS.

ix

I. CRITICAL—*continued*.

PAGE

Notes on Dr. Samuel Davidson's "Introduction to the Old and New Testaments," . . .	157
---	-----

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES AND SKETCHES—

Religious Poetry,	161
Scott, Wordsworth, and Byron,	164
Moore,	165
Southey,	166
Crabbe,	168
Burns's "Jolly Beggars,"	171
Lockhart,	172
Dr. Johnson and the Men of his Age,	174
Relative Merits of Church of England and Dissent- ing Divines,	178
Notes on the Explorations of the Holy Land,	181
On Patrons and Periodicals,	182
An Author's Earliest Production generally the best,	185
FRAGMENTS,	188

II. REFLECTIVE—

The First Feeling of the Great Problem of Existence,	198
Autumn Gleanings,	210
Nature and Science,	225
On Dreams,	226
On Pauses,	229
On the Transmigration of the Soul,	230
On Hopelessness,	233
On Libraries,	236

II. REFLECTIVE— <i>continued.</i>	PAGE
St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey,	237
On Heights and Depths—the Telescope and the Microscope,	239
On Deathbeds,	241
Frost the most Atheistic of Elements,	242
The Sadness of Great Poets,	243
On Doubt,	244
The Superstitious Element in our Religion, . .	248
Reputed Atheists not to be characterised as Fools,	250
On Rationalism, Ritualism, and Pure Religion, .	251
On Progressive Religious Thought,	258
Present Thoughts on Results of recent Biblical Criticism,	262
Religious Symbolism,	264
The Universality of the Religious Sentiment ques- tioned,	266
Judaism and the Immortality of the Soul, . .	269
The Transcendentalists,	273
The Future Life,	276
The Tendency to Simplification and Spiritualisa- tion in Philosophy and Religion,	278
The Idea of Infinitude within the Soul of Man, .	282
Positivism,	284
The Simplicity of the Gospel,	293

SKETCHES.

SELECTIONS.

I. CRITICAL.

COLERIDGE.

SOMETIMES when a feeling of loneliness has oppressed me I have shut myself up in my little room and, turning to my favourite books, have said to myself: "I have no companions, and I wish none, but these."

Here is Burke with his wonderful mixture of thought and eloquence, rocky strength and rushing fire; here is Gibbon with his profound scholarship and majestic style; here Hazlitt with his terse, sharp, and brilliant truth—a shower of scimitars; here Leigh Hunt with his childlike prattle, so loose and so loving; here is Coleridge with his abysmal sentences, sudden and momentary upliftings of the veil of Absolute Being—

"The veil that is woven with Night, and with Terror"
—his radiant fancy, his mournful love for an unsympathetic race, like that of an angel retiring from

fallen Eden, but lingering, loving and singing to the last; and here is the wild Rousseau with his passionate heart falling around you in ruddy rain, his creedless Christianity, his melancholy and isolated position; and the man-seraph Milton, and Shakespeare, "the wheel full of eyes,"—these are my beloved and these are my friends, and with them I can hold fraternal or filial communion, not forgetting the lofty yet lowly Wordsworth, lofty as the mountain snow that feeds the Esk, and lowly as its downpouring and dusky stream; and the mystical and sweet-toned Shelley, that lyre left on a solitary island, and touched at times by a wandering wind into music symphonious with that of the waves of ocean breaking and moaning on the near shore. Then, ere retiring to rest, I would take another last longing look at the Great Bear hanging large and gleaming in the north, while down the south-west the Milky Way was plunging with its two shining arms like those of a diver into some measureless main, and exclaim: "What even a look at these great heavens does, though it were only for a few moments, in raising you above this miserable earth, which seems always somehow a world a-making, the scaffolding never down, the dirt and disarray everlastingly renewed!"

With all this there was much delight, though of a somewhat sombre kind, blended; but at other

times the gloom preponderated and became almost unbroken. Some of the keenest arrows of my agony and disappointment have been darted at me from these very books, when connected with the history of their authors. How sad it is, for instance, in such a mood, to read Coleridge! Such a mind and such a failure in life, in work, in the fulfilments of *his* ideals and of *our* hopes! Ever on the apparent verge of all discovery, and for ever disappointed and disappointing. Scattered rays from heaven shining down on him and on you continually, and giving the promise of something more complete coming, and which never comes. You are tempted to call him a charlatan, till you look again to his fragments, and these certainly are as divine as they are tantalising. Yet his endless predictions of what he was to do, and of what his system, when fully formed, was to explain, provoke and displease you, and surround him, though surely a very sincere man, with an air of quackery, and you say, like Shelley, about him—

“ All things he *seemed* to understand.”

Yet what limited intelligences our present race of philosophers are when compared to him; how void of genius, of imagination, of that daring universalism like Puck's world-including girdle, which distinguished him,—that instinct for all knowledge, that

sense of unity, and that poetical feeling as constantly present in his most abstruse speculations, as the fire is in the mathematical motions of the stars! I remember Shelley's lines on Coleridge in "Peter Bell the Third"—

"A man there came, fair as a maid,"

and that more mournful ditty addressed to him in the lines—

"Oh! there are spirits in the air,
And genii of the evening breeze,
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
As star-beams among twilight trees:—
Such lovely ministers to meet
Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet"—

and so on to its most melancholy close—

"Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
Dark as it is, all change would aggravate."

Yet Coleridge tells us that Shelley, a little before his death, had a most anxious desire to meet him, and get from him some explanation of his difficulties and doubts. I can fancy the face of mournful beautiful disappointment with which the younger poet would probably have regarded the elder as he went

"Sounding on his dim and perilous way."

Yet Coleridge might have done Shelley good by opening up some directions in which his own thoughts might flow with greater satisfaction than

he had. He that lays even one distinct stepping-stone for crossing a chaos is a benefactor. Yet I often feel, for my part, that I would not cross the street to get from any living man the resolution of my doubts. One, I suspect, usually must solve his doubts for himself, or let them alone.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Landor, in his Dialogue between Southey and Porson, accuses Wordsworth of want of sublimity and pathos, of tameness and egotism. His illustrations of these charges are minute and very hypercritical. Who that has read "Ruth" or "The Thorn," or the story of Margaret in "The Excursion," can deny him pathos? And who that remembers "Laodamia," "The Eclipse in Italy," or the story of the Arab in "The Prelude," can refuse his claim to sublimity? As Johnson says of Addison, he is not tame and he does not wish to be energetic—at least to be so always. A *great* Whole he was perhaps incapable of creating—at least he has not created it; but how few have! Not Coleridge or Tennyson or Landor himself, or Byron or Burns;—except Milton, perhaps none in Britain. But his fragments and his small pieces are so numerous, so original, so profound, many of

them so exquisite, and not a few of them so highly finished, as to constitute him a *great Poet*. Landor's death is mentioned by the papers. He is spoken of, intellectually, with due respect; but his sad failure in 1858 is brought too prominently forward. *Premat alta Nox* should be the motto for the oblivion of such things. We rigid, party-spirited Scotch cannot appreciate such a hundred-foot high Ishmaelite as Landor—his hair dishevelled by the winds of an upper atmosphere! His life with all its eccentricities and errors is now a dream; his works remain, a great jagged uncouth world, full of deep, strange, wild, wondrous, inconsistent, fiercely combative and self-contradictory glorious things—millions of births, but little family likeness among them, unified only by that stern original though Protean spirit and power which filled and, at times, tore their author! Peace to those ashes which must have fallen into the very grave at an odd angle! Long ere we see his like again! Born in 1775, he was twenty-two the year Burke died, twenty-five at the century, forty-five at the trial of Queen Caroline, fifty-six at the passing of the Reform Bill, eighty-three at the *éclaircissement* of '58, and now, in his ninetieth year, dead. He reminds one of a planetoid, broken into fragments and descending on earth, one piece knocking out a man's brains, another dropping into a lake or

sea, doing neither good nor ill, and a third containing gold, and becoming a priceless treasure to him at whose door it has lighted. I like best his sweet and serious dialogues such as "Ascham and Lady Jane. Grey," and "Tasso and Cornelia." In some of the others he seems Shakespeare possessed by seven devils.

What poetry, thought, learning, wit, everything he squandered! He led, I would say, a barbaric host like that of Xerxes, 5,000,000 strong, composed of every variety, black, white, tawny, dwarfs, giants, sheep, and goats—a wild, tumultuous, infinite, and endless army, the leader drunk as Suwarrow, or mad as Cambyzes! He had been better with a Leonidas troop of 300, all mettle, brawn, and bone, like Demosthenes in oratory, or Tacitus in history. Yet in Landor there are heights and depths which Demosthenes, no, nor Tacitus, ever approached. A selection from Landor would place him almost beside Shakespeare. But he never had the resolution to subdue his own wild and wondrous thoughts for a page together; his vast forces are always straggling. Burke, I said before, generally *can*; and when he does so, the pages, rich, but ruled by a thorough self-control, are among the noblest in the English language, powerful yet pure, clear yet "gorgeous as the sun at midsummer." Burke has more *complete* passages, and perhaps as great a

quantity of thought as Landor, with no nonsense and trifling, and less paradox and personality; but Landor's thought and imagery are as copious and as profound as Burke's, and are more purely poetical and literary, as you might indeed expect from the different subjects treated. They two are, along with Coleridge, the most suggestive of later writers; but there is much in Landor you cannot read at all, and much that though you read you cannot understand. But he is never thoroughly unintelligible, and is generally legible—at least I find him so. With Landor almost the whole of that race have dropped—Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Hunt, Croly, etc., have disappeared. Landor might have ranked with the highest of these. Suppose two volumes of extracts made, the one from Macaulay and the other from Landor,—which would kick the beam? I could, but need not, answer.

There are, amidst many other scenes or interviews of distinguished men one would wish Landor had turned into "Imaginary Conversations," two that are to me specially interesting. One is the visit that William Hazlitt paid to Landor himself in Italy, in the year, I think, 1825; and the other the interview of Robert Hall and Edward Irving in Bristol, not long before Hall's death. I can only dream how Landor would have described the hag-

gard, pale-faced, dyspeptic, and bold, though well-nigh broken-hearted, critic (whose countenance, after a year or two of absence, Mrs. Shelley only recognised by his *smile*, which reminded her of a flash of lightning at night revealing a once familiar house which had become a ruin) finding out Landor, whom he had often criticised severely, but in whose political honesty he believed, and spending with him an hour or two in eloquent vituperation of their common enemies who were also the enemies of their country. What sentences of red-hot lava would Landor have caught and preserved! And a still finer and more affecting Dialogue could he have founded on the incident mentioned by Irving in his Diary, of his calling without invitation or introduction on Robert Hall (who had been his stern and habitual detractor), springing across his angry fence and gaining first his respectful attention, and then his heart, if not his conviction, as with mild sincerity and solemn pathos, blended with all the deference due to one who was his senior and, conventionally at least, his superior, he poured out his soul on the Millennial Reign and cognate topics! What a picture he might have made of the two heroic men of God! brought so closely together as if in the narrow compass of a saw-pit, —men so like in the main points of character, so different in their environment, and so opposite in

many of their views and tastes ; Irving prematurely grey, thin as a skeleton, tall as a son of Anak, his squint fearfully prominent. Hall in majestic maturity, with bald ample brows, broad bishop-like body, and large eyes bright as if flashing out the fierce day of unabated youth, and at the close of their conversation Irving proposing to pray, and doing so in a style of fervent simplicity ; then one great hearty grasp of each other's hands, and they part friends and part for evermore !—all this, and their talk, Landor, though holding the religious opinions of neither in much esteem, yet sympathising with and understanding both, would have rendered as no other man could.

EDWARD IRVING.

I read yesterday an estimate of Irving and of his orations in an old volume of *Blackwood*. The extracts are fearful in power, in extravagance, and in rampant Calvinism. He did to some extent modify afterwards, but he was to the end an awful terrorist. I suspect Irving was never a genuine thinker. He had the power, but he gave himself no time or sea-room for it. His imagination was morbid, but I wonder that with his heart he did not shrink back in shuddering incredulity from the

savage pictures it drew both of the present and the future world. His God was Siva the Destroyer, and even his Christ seemed admirable to him chiefly as a vindictive angel revealed in flaming fire. Yet there were many amiable as well as heroic elements in him, and at the worst he seems only a fine child in a furious passion, or partially insane. The impertinence of a young Scotch preacher, thirty years of age, bearding London and hurling hell-flames, black fire, and horror in all directions, was only justified by the power and the prodigious stature, literally as well as mentally, of the man. Yet his was only very partially the advent of truth. Had it been so, it would have moved less at first and more afterwards the London public,—and been a growing power. But I am by no means certain that Irving was ever satisfied with the standpoint of his thought. His views seem a kind of chaos with the *disjecta membra* of truth swimming helplessly through it. I have no confidence in the *opinions* of such men as Luther, Irving, and so forth, much as I admire their spirit and genius. Luther in his “Table Talk” throws out a vast number of striking sayings, but fully one half of them have not been verified by facts, and are utterly opposed to science and philosophy. He believed in and predicted the near end of the world! I see in no seer, or expounders of seers, any infallibility. Even Burke and

Coleridge, and Niebuhr and Goethe, though more frequently, and not by accident but reasonably, right, than any others of late, are not always to be depended on.

Read a lecture on Edward Irving—good and even eloquent, but am not exactly pleased with the sentiments about the Tongues. I don't blame Irving very much for his conduct in the matter, though I think he rushed too hastily to his judgment, allowed his preconceived desires to influence his opinions, and even his eye and ear drew near to the fire that he might be burned ; and he was burnt accordingly ! I think the author too lenient in condemning the Tongues themselves. Like all modern miracles, or attempts at miracles, or some defences of old miracles, they were founded on a false principle : namely, that in all stages of society and the Church miracles are equally valuable, and that we are the judges of the *casus* or *crisis* or *nodus* when miracles are necessary, and may compel them from on high. Emphatically, unless accompanied by some new and special revelation of God's will, the age of miracles is over ; and that they should hereafter accompany even this is highly improbable. This writer errs too in his sympathy with Irving's notion of a Modern Missionary. Clothe a missionary of our day in wings, in the enthusiasm and miraculous power of the

Apostles, and you may spare your money, but whereas now the wings are clipt or gone, salaries, and large ones too, are absolutely necessary. Irving's high tone might have suited an age of Peter Hermits or Francis Xaviers. Few of this class now ! We now know as well, though more discriminately than ever, the superiority of the Gospel over heathen systems, but we now value it more for its gradual educational and civilising influences, and care comparatively little for such a fire-eyed rush to save victims from eternal destruction as Missionaries and the Church seem at one time to have identified with their enterprise.

DR. CHALMERS.

Read a good deal of Chalmers's Memoirs to-day. They are interesting, especially the Journal, as revealing a strong and strongly struggling nature—struggling not so much with doubt or darkness as with his temperament, which was of the fieriest and most gunpowder quickness. His bursts of passion were often, I have been told, tremendous. A gentleman, who attended his class at St. Andrews, told me he had to sit a long way back from him to avoid the foam which came from his lips like spray from a cataract. He was a shaggy lion in a slender

though sufficient network of grace, but not, I think, fully reconciled to our modern versions of Christianity, and the longer the less.

Read Chalmers's letters. They show chiefly his heart, but contain little thought or suggestive matter. How different from Burke's, or Foster's, or Robertson's (of Brighton)! Chalmers had to lash himself into thought; *they* could not help thinking even in undress; their very slippers are set with diamonds. I remember hearing a preacher who was compared to Foster, and distinguishing between them thus: Foster goes naturally and irresistibly to the depths; M. makes desperate efforts to reach them, and *succeeds*. Had Chalmers lived ten years longer, what a serene smiling old heretic he would have become—the Pio Nono of the Broad Church! Noble man altogether, a “benign man,” as Professor Wilson used to call him. Best of all that fine irrepressible enthusiasm for nature which bursts out ever and anon. A friend showed him the scenery of the South Esk in 1843, and said he never witnessed such rapturous admiration even in a young poet. Chalmers was then sixty-three.

Read an able paper by M. on Chalmers. He has however a long dissertation on oratory, and what an orator should be, which might have been

spared. The pith of it may be condensed into the words:—"A true orator will be an orator and something more,—must not only speak well, but must have something to say." I don't think this requires a dissertation. His account of conversion as a moral wrench toward the supernatural is, in a limited sense, true, but does not meet the whole case, or include thousands of good and pious people who have never had and never needed any such wrench. Besides, he leaves out entirely the element of truth (and I use truth here in a large and liberal sense) in the matter. He instances Loyola along with Chalmers as a specimen of the moral wrench. But Loyola's wrench (many Catholics as well as Protestants think) was in the direction of falsehood and spiritual imposture. Had Byron renounced profligacy, and become a Popish monk, it had been a spiritual wrench, doubtless, but not a conversion to truth and righteousness.

Read all Chalmers's "Astronomical Discourses" yesterday. My impressions of it are confirmed. The book as a whole is a weak argument, and not the strongest of declamations. Its verbiage, looseness of structure, and barbarous bombast of style, are often unpleasant, and its thought (except what he has appropriated from other authors, such as Andrew Fuller the Baptist) is exceedingly extempore.

And yet it has great merit ; some passages of transcendent word-force, as shining, though not so rich or strong, as the conflagrations of Burke ; the noblest picture (Sermon II.) ever drawn of an ideal philosopher of the Baconian school, under the name of Newton, and a view of the Modern Astronomy rising, and rising easily, to regions of lofty eloquence if not poetry. Its worst passages hurry you on almost as much as its best. Though only of noisy mud, they constitute a cataract of it and are irresistible. Altogether a curiosity among books. Hazlitt describes himself spending some hours devouring it when it first appeared, in the garden at Boxhill. He admired its eloquence, but seemed puzzled what to make of its argument. I have heard a good story of old Dr. Kidd of Aberdeen. That eccentric person (see Masson in *Macmillan's Magazine* about him) wrote a book on "The Eternal Sonship," which nobody could or indeed ever pretended to understand. When Chalmers published his "Astronomical Discourses," he sent a copy of it to Dr. Kidd, who talked of it thus : "There's that fellow Chalmers sent me his book about the stars. I could make neither head nor tail o't. But I had my revenge ! I sent him in my turn a copy of my "Eternal Sonship" !

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Carlyle should always be listened to either by moonlight or amidst the evening shadows. There is a deep settled, though mellow, melancholy in his tones, which is in fine harmony with the play of the moonbeams and the plaint of the evening waters. It is like the talk of a spirit. Ever and anon, too, it is interrupted by heavy sighs, or it dies away into brief but pregnant pauses, or it breaks out into strange, mystic, unfathomable laughter. He seems to speak in a wild but musical rhythm, which the woods, the wailing waters, and those other nameless and homeless sounds which traverse the solitudes, have learned from God and taught to him.

His admiration of Goethe is unbounded. He once said to me that Goethe had given in his "Wilhelm Meister" (in the "Three Reverences") the finest account of Christianity ever drawn, and that when he showed it to Edward Irving, who used to speak to him of Goethe as a "Pagan idol," he owned its exceeding power and truth. He also spoke much of Coleridge, as having had a great light in him which he had quenched and drowned, and to his weakness and want of moral hardihood he traced Puseyism. In talking of Religion he mourned over

its low state, and denounced the pretension and cant which had gathered round it like a crust of corruption. It was altogether a moonlight homily to night from a voice crying in the wilderness, and sounding like the echo of the very soul of earnestness.

Carlyle's opinion of society is not of a very sanguine complexion. He regards it as thoroughly and completely corrupt. Our civil matters are the fatal fruit of innumerable errors which have bred in and in, and got intertwined in such a monstrous manner, that the axe must be applied to the root. Our Religion is a great truth groaning its last. Truth, Justice, God, have become big staring words, like the address remaining on the sign after the house has been abandoned, or like the envelope after the letter has been extracted, drifting down the wind! They mean not what they meant once, and have long ceased to have any real meaning at all. Falsehood, insincerity, namby-pambyism, poltroonery and cant, are the order of the day. These sins and littlenesses are rapidly working out their own retribution. Man, believing neither in his Maker nor himself, is receiving in his bitter experience that reward of his error which is meet. Meanwhile, Science is groping blindly and aimlessly amidst the dry dead clatter of the machinery which it calls the Universe; Poetry, inditing

mawkish sentiment or morbid delirium ; History, stumbling over dry bones in a valley no longer of vision ; and Philosophy, lisping and babbling about Infinite and Endless unintelligibilities. While he discourses in some such style, his eyes and lips seem to move in time to each other, as if performing parts in one wild melody ; and the melancholy tones of his voice, as well as the gloomy grandeur, and at times picturesque plainness, of his imagery, give you the impression that a belated Ezekiel is walking beneath the evening canopy by your side. In what plaintive and powerful language he painted the great retributive course which Providence pursues to nations, when after an appointed period, a giant lie sinks down into "Hell-fire," and a great truth arises clothed in a "garment dipped in blood ;" and men, standing afar off, in fear of torment, call the dread phenomenon a Revolution ! Misery is Carlyle's element, and he is now native and inured to it. The Nessus-shirt has been worn so long, that it is hanging more loosely around him ; nay, seems at times absolutely to wave jauntily and luxuriously about his limbs ! The Promethean vulture is at his liver still, but seems wearying in the greatness of her gloomy task, and looks sometimes half asleep, as she dully, mechanically, and with blunted beak, gnaws on. But Death is the only Hercules who can un-

bind him. How hopeless he is! He has, perhaps, a faith of a certain stern and awful, though vague kind; but he is "even without hope in the world." There is not a sunbeam, no, not one, on his sullen sea! That "Nachterschein" of Christianity which he speaks of as having saved him from suicide, gleams around him no more, and no other light seems to have risen instead. Whatever his Gospel may have been once, it is now a Gospel of hard-working despair. Yet the poet Thomson has long ago, when describing the hunted stag at bay, told us "Despair is a weak refuge," and it is weakest in the strong. He is hopeless of all things,—hopeless of Poetry, as if truth, like a sheep, needed a bell hung round its neck ere it could be permitted to go abroad; hopeless of Politics,—and this he expressed in a terrible attack on Daniel O'Connell as one who had abused great popular powers to selfish purposes, who drew away the mind of Ireland from its true interests to an enterprise as absurd as to seek to suck the moon from the sky, and comparing his last moments to the ostrich cramming her head into a bush, "so had the big coward run away to Rome to hide his eyes beneath the Pope's petticoats, instead of manfully looking in the face the great fact that was coming upon him;" hopeless too of Art, Science, and of what is called Progress. There

are tears in this rugged man as well as wild laughter. Twice in manhood he is reported to have wept,—once when he saw a beloved friend in a state of mental darkness, and another time when as he left his mother's house she accompanied him part of the way, and silently shot into his hand, as she was wont in sending him off in the morning to school, a parcel of peppermints. The strong mature man could not stand this, but blubbered like a child.

I found him, though very kind and condescending, on the whole a miserable comforter, and his system, if it could be called so, not at all satisfactory on mature reflection. It professed to teach men to work and to bear, but what was the use of working and bearing in an unreconciled spirit, and without hope?

“Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.”

“To bear is to conquer our fate” only when that fate is felt to be all for the best, and to be not impersonal Destiny, but personal and Fatherly Will. His notions of God seemed to want the proper basis of a belief in Man, and that Carlyle with all his Hero-worship possesses not. He believes not in the human race, but in single men, not in the wood but in the tall trees, not in the hills but in the volcanoes, not in the Map of Man, but in the red ridges which

cross it, and point to crime, cruelty, and blood, as well as to elevation. He selects his heroes not for their virtues, but for their prowess, or, more strictly speaking, for their size. Size, Strength, and Courage are the trinity of qualities in man that he worships. It is curious what a strange charm he exerts, or exerted once, over narrow and gloomy religionists, or at least a certain number of them, certifying, what he once confessed, that had it not been for Goethe and the other Germans he would have been a fanatic of the first water.¹

They made him for a season cosmopolitan and almost joyous, but his nature has become latterly more one-sided and ungenial. His sympathies seem to have been for long more with the Jewish economy than with the Christian. It is Law crowning itself with Sinaitic flames, or severely shining on the words of Mahomet and Cromwell, and not Love that he worships. And hence a good many of that class, a large one still, who call themselves Christians, and who, while doing battle for every "if" and "and"

¹ H. C. Robinson in his *Diary* confirms this statement. He says, vol. iii. :—"Carlyle is a deep-thinking German scholar, a character and a singular compound. His voice and manner, and even the style of his conversation, are those of a religious zealot, and he keeps up that character in this declamation against the anti-religious. And yet he has a priest and prophet in Goethe, of whose profound wisdom he speaks like an enthusiast. 'But for him,' Carlyle says, 'he should not be now alive.' To me he remarked, 'Had I met only Edinburgh Whigs, and thought there were no better men in the world, I would have gone away and hanged myself. But I met with some Germans, and they did me great good.'"

of the written Word, love religion really for what of the old sour leaven of Judaism has been left within it, admire or did admire Carlyle, and breathe constantly the prayer that he were not almost but altogether such an one as themselves! We know indeed of one, a man of worth and scholarship, but somewhat narrow and one-sided, and an extreme Millenarian to boot, who looked on Carlyle in a different light. He long prayed for his conversion, and then, tiring of this, he began to pray for the destruction alike of Carlyle himself and his influence!

Carlyle began his career in a much better spirit. His early works were genial, even Christian, in their tone, and, for him, happy. But he was afterwards stung into fiercer and more misanthropic views, and ere he was aware, he was seen in the wake of Moses, that stern and stony legislator, panting up the steep and narrow way leading to the top of Sinai! And it is the element, common alike to Judaism, Mahometanism, and Calvinism, which constitutes—we cannot say his hope, for hope he has none—but his creed. He has little sympathy with the glad raptures of Isaiah; Jeremiah is his favourite prophet, and he can understand his “cry.” With the fury of Ezekiel too and of Malachi he has obviously a fellow-feeling, but he does not understand the character or breathe the spirit of Jesus Christ. Those

great Christian ideas of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man; of the Divine Man, Elder Brother and Universal Reconciler; of the glory of forgiveness; doing good to the fallen and "remembering the forgotten;" of the omnipotence of love and lowliness, of the validity of hope, and of the certainty of human perfectionment,—such divine thoughts seem to him but rich dreams; and what else, alas! are some of them to a vast portion of Christians too?

Carlyle derived from nature a *plusquam*-Scottish heat, or *perfervidum ingenium* of temperament, which by circumstances has been deprived of its proper vent in some task or occupation fit for him, and which, after making terrible work in his heart, has broken out furiously at Society and man and things in general. He should have been perhaps an officer or traveller in his youth, or at all events, when he wrote his "Latter-Day Pamphlets," should have taken to farming, and discharged his exuberant and hoarded bile in the shape of sweat into the clods of the valley.

Carlyle's chief powers are two: he can describe and denounce as no other living man can, and it is a proof of how well he could do both that the public accepted him, though he has done little else, and has seldom come into the ranks of real intellectual or philosophical contest. But we question

if he shall be highly rated hereafter as a teacher, since he has taught us little that is strictly new, and many of the shams he has exposed seem lively still, and may grow as nettles on his grave. I love on the whole my recollections of the strong, simple, kindly, homely yet proud, irritable, soured, solitary and unhappy man,—this Titan, bound, bewildered and clamorous in his woe, but unquestionably sincere; and if not great as Milton, Burke, and his own Goethe and Schiller were great, yet very extraordinary both in himself and the influences he has exerted on his age.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Emerson the American author and I had a good deal of talk. His conversation is not so powerful or rich as Carlyle's, but is highly intelligent and pleasing. He spoke much of Goethe, and strongly advised me to study his works, because, he said, he talked less nonsense than any other writer. He is very pleasant and amiable, but there is a depth in his character as well as in his intellect. He is one of Nature's spies; his eye has a basilisk look at times—searching, sinister, soundless in its expression. When eyeing one sometimes, it is as if the body and the rest of the face had vanished, and

those strange, serpent-like, dull, glittering eyes alone remained. His own innocence is spotless; and he is continually in search of this innocence more than of that virtue which struggles and is sometimes overcome, but is at last victorious in other men. It is said that he would not allow his children to be baptized till he could find one to do it as harmless as they were. In Channing, at last, he recognised the "weaned child" who was fit to sprinkle pure water on his little lambs, and they were baptized accordingly. This is a beautiful trait, but it springs from an error already indicated. Christianity offers the highest prizes to those who overcome, not to those who, in their natural and blameless condition, are not called on even to fight. Yet there can be no doubt that Emerson has done good service in America. He has combated alike its extreme orthodoxy and its materialism, and thrown out great masses of practical wisdom. His better Essays remind you of Goethe's conversations with Eckermann, in their amazing breadth and depth, although they have not always the German's consummate clearness. Yet some of his books are strange productions. He has a trick of presenting common-places in such an odd, abrupt manner, and under such a peculiar light, that they look original. He holds up a truism as he might a twig to the moon, till it seems a golden bough. His philosophical

manner lies sometimes in confronting half-truths with each other, and deeming that he has reconciled by stating both too strongly. Thus, in the first part of his essay on Fate he makes Man almost entirely passive in the hands of Race, Destiny, or Nemesis; and in the second part he attributes to him a liberty little short of omnipotence. He reminds one of the Irish student who, being asked how he could reconcile the facts of the Devil being chained and yet going about like a roaring lion, replied, "Ah, he must have a very long chain!" Emerson's man is fettered with a chain that might encompass the universe! He shines in fractions, like bits of broken glittering glass, or sharp pin-points, but is incapable of any clear definite whole. A kind of afternoon or evening shadow seems gathering over his writings—how different from the fresh morning feeling of his "Nature"! Even when he talks most sanguinely of human progress, he does not seem happy. He may believe in it, but (as was said with Foster and the Gospel) he derives little pleasure from the belief. Perhaps, after all, the best thing in his writings is the perpetual recurrence in his first works to the American forests, streams, and stars. His is philosophy illustrated, and if his woods are withered and leafless, he clothes them with sunshine and with fire.

I met him in the house of a great professor

of Christianity, where he used to kneel along with the rest at family prayer. I contrasted his conduct favourably in this point with another American lecturer, and avowed unbeliever (C. H.), a worthy sort of man in his way, and a clever, who at prayers and in church too assumed the most absurd and awkward attitude, between kneeling, standing, and sitting,—a kind of crippled protest, you thought, in the house of Rimmon against its false worship, as of a Naaman benumbed. He was thrown into prison in America for a political libel, and lay there a year, living (voluntarily) upon bread and water. He had, with some faults, good powers, manly sentiments, and much frankness and *bonhomie*. He had a good head-piece, but people laughingly and profanely told him that Nature, having made it with considerable pains, seemed to have tired of the task, and huddled up the rest of him in a hurry. His lower features were almost infantinely small, and his body, though middle-sized, was pithless and *shauchly*. I think he has been long dead.

DE QUINCEY.

I knew the English opium-eater a little, and dwell with pleasure on some recollections of that gifted and remarkable man, who consumed more laudanum and learning than any person (unless Coleridge) of his day. De Quincey was a little man, with a broad, well-developed brow, a deep unsearchable eye, a pleasant expression of face, and very bland and gracious manners. He always reminded me of Henbane Dwining in his small stature, insinuating humble address, and occasional sneering tone, although he was a very different character from the "wicked Pottingar," being a really kind-hearted and lovable man. The two evenings I spent in his company were very agreeable and suggestive. De Quincey received his guests with a true cordiality which went immediately to their hearts, and afterwards launched out on his favourite themes. He spoke much of the Lake Poets, and with great admiration of their genius, but with somewhat less of their character. He seemed to share in the feeling wherewith Professor Wilson regarded them. He told a story about a quarrel Wilson had with Coleridge. They were living at one time in the same house, perhaps at Elleray. Coleridge found on the

blank leaf of a volume a character in Wilson's handwriting which, unflattering as it was, he soon discovered to be a picture of himself. It spoke of one C., and described him as a most overbearing talker, and, through his egotism and dogmatism, thoroughly disgusting. Coleridge took the book to Wilson and accused him of the authorship. Wilson fired up, and would not acknowledge it; and thereupon there arose a temporary rupture between the two. "Confound him!" he cried, "what right had he to infer anything from the letter C.?—it might have been Campbell!" I said I had noticed in an early *Blackwood* a ferocious attack on Coleridge, written in a style very like Wilson's, and that this anecdote would father it on him. De Quincey said it was probably his. He praised Shelley highly, especially his "Revolt of Islam," which he thought had more power than anything else of his writing; and he proceeded to quote the lines of the stanza in the eleventh Canto, in which Laon surrenders himself to his enemies with the words—

"The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,
And smiled in gentle pride, and said, 'Lo, I am he!'"

as one of the finest points in poetry. I coincided in this, and ventured to express also the opinion that the first Canto of that poem had, for sustained sublimity and unearthly music, been seldom sur-

passed in the language. It fell off and languished afterwards, but again at the close became exceedingly powerful.

De Quincey was a beautiful reader of poetry. I had heard some other admirable readers of it. Wilson's reading was fine, with his slow, solemn, Covenanting tones, his deep voice and chest, the wail of his cadences, and the enthusiasm which now flashed out from, and now lurked far down in, his eye. He often lingered over a line, one would think for ever, and as if he said, "I will not let thee go till thou bless me by surrendering all thy meaning and beauty." I had heard imitations of Wordsworth's recitation of his ode on "Intimations of Immortality," and if they were correct, there must have been not only depth but peeling power in the poet's voice, pomp and fire combined. Edward Irving's reading of the Psalms was proverbial for its grandeur. Dr. Samuel Brown, notwithstanding a little of the artificial, read with much taste, graceful power, and at times a beautiful abandonment. Chalmers again was all abandonment together, and seemed always reading poetry as if it were composed, and newly composed, by himself. Thomas Aird read stiffly, and not very well, but with a *sotto voce* of deep subdued feeling. I never heard Carlyle read or quote anything of length, but believe that he reads Burns well, and

his repetition of some lines from Goethe in his Rectorial speech at Edinburgh was very effective. But as a whole, De Quincey surpassed them all. He repeated poetry with a union of distinctness, elegance, and deep feeling which was most impressive. There was a *firm tremble* in his low-pitched voice which was very fine.

Better still in De Quincey, I liked his generous genial heart and manners—his kindness to young aspirants, including myself—his total want of envy and detracting habits, although one could sometimes gather that he felt a little at the undue elevation of certain men who were not his superiors. He could not and did not like, that while he was living almost on charity and under hiding, men decidedly second to him in original power and depth should be lauded M.P.'s, perhaps of the same city.

Some time after this De Quincey removed to Glasgow, and calling on him there I found him in a mean room, such as students were wont to live in for five or six shillings a week, and was grieved to see the ablest man in the western capital thus lodged. I heard of him, either before or after that time, living a while in a friend's house, in a half-torpid condition under opium, not fully awake till a late dinner hour, then brightening up for a season into talk richer than music, and then, in fine, sinking back into the hibernated

state again for twenty hours! The last time I saw him was in Edinburgh, where he resided the greater part of the week, often going out on the Saturday to spend a day or two with his amiable daughters at Lasswade. His conversation had lost some of its brilliance, but had now more of sarcastic humour. He died in 1859, aged seventy-five. How with his opium-eating habits he contrived to live so long is a mystery. Professor Wilson used to call him "the greatest of us all by Nature," and to say of his style, "the best word always comes up." With this latter sentiment I can hardly agree: I have seen De Quincey's MS. where words were piled over each other's heads, two, three, and four deep—erasure after erasure,—and where the word at the top was the best;—but he had elaborately found it; it had not spontaneously "come up."

But that the other saying of Wilson was the truth, one might appeal to his "Confessions" and his "Suspiria de Profundis," where the transcendent borders on the supernaturally grand, and where the pathetic becomes the heart-rending. There is no such thinking or writing now. "Sighs those," said a Millenarian of them, "only to be answered by the Second Advent." Nay, prose poetry never had anything superior to "The Palimpsest" or "The Three Ladies of Sorrow." At Lasswade De Quincey indulged in those long night walks which he de-

scribes in one of his Essays. His custom was to start from Lasswade about midnight, sometimes alone, sometimes with a companion, to whom he would talk wondrously all the time, cross sleeping Edinburgh and strike down Leith Walk to the point of the Pier, where he always wheeled round and came back. A friend of mine used sometimes to accompany him. One night when he had reached Hope Park Church on his return, he suddenly, casting a startled look behind, exclaimed, "My adversaries are in full chase of me ; good-night, Mr. B.;" and took to his heels, pausing not till he had reached his home in Lasswade again. By his adversaries he meant either devils or creditors, or a conjunction of both.

De Quincey did not admire Macaulay, nor Carlyle, nor Brougham, nor Goethe. His love of Burke, Coleridge, Schiller, Jean Paul Richter, as well as of Wordsworth, Shelley, Hazlitt, and Wilson, was profound. A young enthusiast—blessings on the memory of poor dear G. R.,—on one of the nights referred to, quoted to him some passages from Robert Hall—such as his description of the "Funeral of a Lost Soul,"—which he praised slightly, but evidently did not much admire; but when another of the same party repeated Aird's "Devil's Dream upon Mount Acksbeck," De Quincey was

very much struck, and said—"That man should write poetry." He was at times inconsistent in his judgments. In the course of those evenings he spoke of that "brilliant man John Foster;" and yet in *Tait's Magazine* for 1845-6 he has very much under-rated his genius, as well as that of William Godwin. There are a few men of this age of whom no duplicate or repetition can ever be expected, any more than another Donati's comet. Such are William Blake, Charles Lamb, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and De Quincey. Macaulays, Jeffreys, Halls, Southey's, Broughams, and so forth, may appear again—men we mean of a similar type of character and equal calibre. But when shall we have another Blake? that dear *daft* dreamer "who once saw the spiritual Sun on Primrose Hill;" who along with his Catharine Boucher walked in the garden like our first parents, "naked and not ashamed;" whose visions, absurd and ridiculous in their outward form, contain in their inmost meaning deep intuitions of moral and spiritual truth; and who seemed to have the imagination of the lover, the lunatic, and the poet, all compacted into his one wondrous faculty; and we may add, that of the child too, for a child to his last breath William Blake unquestionably was. When shall we have another Charles Lamb? that wit without malice; punster without pettiness; man without

guile, and Christian without cant. When shall we have another Coleridge, the mighty poet, and the subtle-souled psychologist? When another Shelley, who, ignoring the Divine, was divinely guided, like a blind child led by the hand of his Father-God? When another Wordsworth, the grand modern psalmist of Nature? And when another De Quincey, a "diver lean and strong," able to gain the profoundest abysses—caverns deeper than the pit; and thence, where other men could not breathe, to utter sobs, groans, *Suspiria*, to which there can, in our present life, be no reply?

Keenly, more than all, did I regret to have been too late for meeting with William Blake! De Quincey and Coleridge had by opium-eating interfered with, exaggerated, twisted out of its healthy mode of action, their great natural dreaming power; but in Blake you had it in all its native simplicity and strength, and in every subject he had a "vision of his own," from the historical characters, Pilate, Wallace, Edward the First, who appeared to his eye to be painted, to the

"TIGER, TIGER, BURNING BRIGHT."

EDMUND BURKE.

Read Burke's letters in the new edition of his Works. They are not so piquant as some, but I notice a growth of thought in them which is very well worth studying. This may be better seen through the slipshod matter than in speeches or books, where growth is often hid under the foliage and flutter of words. I don't expect, however, that the reading of this Correspondence—although it did so to Jeffrey—will increase, although it may confirm, my opinion of Burke's marvellous mind. I think I see in the portrait prefixed to this edition, one secret, if not *the* secret, of his power, in the expression of profound concatenated and perpetual thought,—not bare thought, however, but thought rigged with sentiment, and voyaging through seas of imagination; but whether waking or sleeping, in reverie, conversation, pleasure, study, or dream, never resting.

Burke's language is often hard, his sense harder, like a hard snowball enclosing a stone. I like his "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly" better, on the whole, than his "Reflections on the French Revolution." It is less elaborate and diffuse, and richer in thought and figure, although, per-

haps, with no passages in it equal to some in the other.

It seems strange to find Coleridge in his contributions to the *Morning Post*, while praising Burke highly, speaking slightly of his "Letter to a Noble Lord," which is usually held one of the most piquant and brilliant of his works, and parts of which you might fancy written in a compound of quicksilver and gunpowder, so elastic, light, and burning are their words, produced by him, too, at sixty-eight; and when he was broken-hearted by the loss of his son. Surely the passage about his son has seldom been surpassed in literature. Coleridge, however, highly praises *it*, and also what he says of Admiral Keppel.

Burke, I find, in his letter-writing, never gets out of the track of that kind of composition in manner or style,—no flights or fantasies, no regular disquisitions; he pursues a plain path, and the letters are valuable chiefly as showing the immense stock of sense that was in him. His correspondents, such as Sir William Jones, seem always aware that they are writing to Burke, and must, therefore, write their best, and they do;—he makes no difference to any of them, makes no effort, and shines simply like the sun, by going on his way.

Read John Morley on Burke. He admires him highly; but is not sufficiently indignant at Carlyle's

stupid and suicidal saying about him—a “far-seeing rhetorician,”—for what is this but a thinker *plus* rhetoric, or a rhetorician *plus* thought; in short, a poet in a very high sense of that term, while Carlyle evidently means it in derogation! Morley talks away about Burke’s “Oriental imagination,” “Asiatic imagination,” “blinding passion,” etc.; all nonsense, as if Burke’s imagination were ever anything more than the obedient slave of the lamp to a genie-like intellect, his ornament the mere measure and flower of his thought, his “gems” as “oracular” as “ardent,” his passion not blinding, but enabling him to see objects previously invisible. He seems to think that a philosopher should be always calm, thereby confounding a philosopher with a judge. Was Plato always calm? or Bacon? Sometimes, no doubt, a philosopher requires to be calm, and Burke often is, in his later as well as in his earlier productions. But then he, as well as Plato and Milton, aspired often to the prophetic stature and mood—to see things intuitively, and to utter the “cry” which accompanies such intuition. But calmness is not a common characteristic of the prophetic order; and Carlyle, at least, would have no right to blame Edmund Burke for the frenzied vision and the furious proclamation of truth. Morley hesitates too much in announcing his belief in Burke, is too apologetic, and besides is too much of a republican

and an American sympathiser to be Burke's appreciator. He should remember that the New Republic is even yet on its trial, and that the opinion of a man like Burke, who had weighed political matters at once theoretically and practically, against its success on any conditions, is a powerful presumption that it may not ultimately as a republic answer. Bentham and Burke should never be named together, from the unlikeness, if not the inferiority, of the one to the other. Yet Morley does so; and evidently thinks that Bentham was the more undeniable philosopher of the two. I doubt this very much, and never shall place a jurist, however able, beside a great poetical as well as philosophical genius—a Solon beside a Plato.

Seeley, too, does Burke scant justice. He admits him, indeed, to be a great political philosopher, but he ranks him with Macaulay, who was not a great political philosopher at all, and he absurdly classes his fine writing with declamation. Now I call that declamation which does not arise naturally from thinking, like foam on the swell of the billow, but is artificially added to it as an afterthought, and there is very little of this in Burke.¹

¹ I find Macaulay, having re-read Burke towards his closing days, saying, "Admirable! our greatest man since Milton."—See Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*.

COLERIDGE ON THOMAS CAMPBELL.

Read a portion of Coleridge's new "Remains." It is, as I expected, a shower of scattered gems, some of them very precious, but not many of them new; most having appeared in periodicals before. He is very unjust to his contemporaries—Southey, Scott, and Campbell. He thinks "Kehama" a work of great talent and ingenuity, but not of genius. Well! call it what you choose; it wields a most potent spell over the fancy, and the closing part is, to my feeling at least, awfully, transcendently sublime.

Finished "Kehama." The close, representing Kailyal's happiness, is beautifully tender. But sometimes one's perverse fancy goes back to Kehama crushed below the golden throne, and you exchange the anger you felt at him for pity; pity for him and for a disappointed Hell! You would not feel this if there were any hope of his restoration. This feeling adheres to all belief in Eternal Punishment. It changes the lost into objects of sympathy, victims of too harsh a doom, and thus destroys the moral effect of punishment. An *Azura*—the Hindoo name for a demon—in power you hate; an *Azura* in eternal torment you pity; an *Azura* suffering till he repent becomes interesting, and an object of sympathy and hope.

Coleridge specially underrates Campbell when

he speaks of him as a mere pleasing and pretty versifier. In exquisite morsels of beauty—crumbs from the celestial table!—few poets of modern times—not Coleridge nor Wordsworth—have surpassed Campbell. In general classic eloquence and taste he ranks with Horace and Virgil; his pathos in “O’Connor’s Child” and the “Exile of Erin” and “Lord Ullin’s Daughter” is profound; and he has a certain sober yet enthusiastic sublimity in “Lochiel’s Warning” and “The Last Man” all his own. His is true “Greek fire,” so chaste and pure, yet so keen and ardent. In his better odes, and in parts of “O’Connor’s Child,” I could no more think of altering a word or excluding a sentence than of dashing out a star from the Plough, or erasing one of the Pleiades! Nor is this perfection the effect of polish merely, but of the patrician cast of his genius. How a boy from a garret in the High Street of Glasgow could ever and so early discover a taste as refined, and an instinct as decisive, as those of Athens in her best age, I can in no other way explain. His “Pleasures of Hope,” full as it is of youthful falsetto and flourish, is full also of this innate aristocracy; its very bombast is regal. The mystical fudge of the imitators of Browning and Tennyson has kept Campbell out of sight of late, but his gentle star—

“The star that bringeth home the bee,”

will appear again in her meek western horizon. What can be more graceful, more elegant, yet more simple in their beauty, than the love stanzas to "Caroline"! What cultured strength, like "beechwood in the blast," in his stanzas on "Leaving a Scene in Bavaria"! What tremulous finish in his lines on "Painting" and "Field Flowers"! What chastened prophecy, what subdued inspiration, like the half-unfolded wing of an angel, in his "Lines to Emigrants"! What light, sparing, yet beautiful touches in "Gertrude of Wyoming," like the stealthy strokes of a superhuman artist, anxious to be unknown, yet unable to resist the temptation to leave the marks of a heavenly hand on the canvas! What Horatian daring in his "Lines to Kemble;" Homeric daring in his "Lochiel" and "Hohenlinden" and "The Battle of the Baltic;" and Dante-like daring in his "Last Man"!

The critic must be a poor or a prejudiced one who should class Campbell with such an elegant moth as Rogers, such a bright butterfly as Moore, with Beattie and Mason, or even Gray. Yet I find in Moore's "Memoirs" a record of a conversation on Campbell between Wordsworth, Moore, Landseer, and others, full of miserable carpings at imaginary defects in his poems—a conversation in which Wordsworth looks very small, and Moore, in a spirit highly creditable to himself, says that

"Campbell's lesser poems bade more fair for immortality than almost any lyrics of the present day." One of the things objected to was (*credite posteri!*) "the Meteor Flag of England braving the battle and the *breeze!*"

Campbell's misfortune was that he did not, like Scott, after his early success proceed to evolve new worlds of creation from the depths of his mind; but that arose from causes—struggling circumstances, self-indulgence, and so forth—with which poor Coleridge could only too well sympathise. Bulwer, who knew Campbell thoroughly, speaks somewhere with the greatest admiration of his conversation as now and then, in favourable circumstances—especially when he once sat talking all afternoon and all night,—revealing the real extent and riches of his mind. But he was sparing and slow in turning his bullion into circulating gold; and hence the misapprehension so common as to the limitations of his genius.

Thomas Hood gives in "Hood's Own" a graphic picture of Coleridge, with his white hair, and fat, ruddy, full face, his mode of conversation, always standing if only on one foot, and his queer *digs* at orthodox popular notions, as when he says that many people expect after death to get wings and become a sort of celestial poultry. Poor Samuel Taylor Coleridge! What a fine fellow he had been

in his latter days, although always a little self-indulgent—a kind of Plato-Apollo-Jacob Boehmen-Bacchus. He was wealthy in thoughts, images, and extempore speculations, and had, as I said before, a wonderful universality of range and genius, but had no great leading idea to possess, unify, and permanently inspire him. Here he differed from Spinoza, Kant, Swedenborg, and Fichte. His proper *magnum opus* should have been, perhaps, not a new philosophy but a philosophical poem glorifying some philosophical belief, as Lucretius did to the Epicurean theory of things. He could throw out pregnant and profound germs, but not excogitate any complete or massive system of thought. Troops of grand ideas passed before Coleridge's view, clad in barbaric pearl and gold; but they passed reeling, disordered, confused, contradicting, and trampling down each other in their tumultuous march. Burke again could, in general, command his legions, and make them move to the music of one great object. A man who has no control over his appetites and passions has seldom much over his thoughts. Burke had; Coleridge had not. Yet if Coleridge wanted power to produce a philosophical whole, he had undoubtedly power, at least in youth, to create an artistic unity—as in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” It is not a large, but it is a true whole artistically, as well as a wondrous poem.

HOBBES AND LEIBNITZ.

Hobbes and Leibnitz were both extraordinary men : Leibnitz with more pretence about him, and less of the simple solid greatness of Hobbes, who thought sheerly out of his own soul truths of the most searching kind, mixed with gigantic paradoxes. Nor had Leibnitz the grand severe granitic structure of Kant and Fichte, his countrymen. He was a Brobdingnagian bee passing from flower to flower, and field to field, with more noise and restlessness than progress or fructification. De Quincey compares him to Coleridge, and he had more than his pretensions, and did more in the philosophical field, but had less poetry—more “energetic reason,” but less of a “shaping mind.” De Quincey speaks specially of their resemblance to each other in bodily strength, having had both, he says, “the constitution of horses” as well as transcendent intellects.

MACAULAY'S JOTTINGS—WARBURTON.

By the way, talking of Macaulay, I saw the other day some jottings of his on the fly-leaves of some old volumes which had fallen into the hands

of James Hamilton of London. They are very like him,—decisive, sharp, dogmatic, but strong, sensible, and usually just. He describes Warburton very well,—his tantalising half gleams of truth, his incomplete scholarship, his paradoxes coming forth like pigs, “fifteen in the litter,” and many of them blind for life,—his arrogance, truculence, and want of ingenuousness in argument,—his mixing up bits of various theories into one abortive whole,—his many rash and exploded hypotheses. I doubt, however, if he does justice either to Warburton’s powers or his position. He was unquestionably a man of prodigious strength of intellect, rough, rich fancy and energetic eloquence, though prevented by his early disadvantages from becoming a thoroughly ripe and good scholar, as well as from learning the tone and manner of good society, which, however, were inferior to what they are now. I remember in an early number of *Blackwood* a very able, eloquent, though somewhat timid paper on Warburton and Johnson, and have often wished to know who the writer was.

A complete collection of the Macaulay jottings would be interesting and valuable. Still, how inferior to those drops of liquid gold which fell from the pen of Coleridge on the fly-leaves and margins of his favourite books! These, like the character of Sir Thomas Browne, and some notes on Luther, are profounder and more suggestive than

anything Macaulay could do, and act on the pages where they occur like the magical gleams of autumn sunlight on a landscape, revealing them in a new and beautiful aspect. Macaulay, by the way, in that paper preserved by Hamilton, proves himself to be a terrible literary detective, unequalled in finding out plagiarisms and coincidences in writers, and would in this capacity have been especially formidable to "the noticeable man with large grey eyes" himself. Poor Coleridge, when he once in his boyhood accidentally put his hand into a gentleman's pocket in the Strand, and excused himself by saying that he was Leander swimming across the Hellespont, may be said to have mythically expressed his own practice of unconscious appropriation. His hand in dream often found itself, or rather was found, in the pockets of authors infinitely poorer than himself. It is a curious subject the pilfering of Coleridge, like the *kleptomania* of a *millionaire*, and may be found fully treated in De Quincey's paper in Hare's remarks prefixed to Coleridge's "Table Talk," and in an able paper in *Blackwood* for 1840 by, I think, Professor Ferrier.

DR. KNOX.

There was another of our great though not appreciated modern teachers of men whom I knew, who lived and died in the world's frown, and yet possessed some noble qualities both of head and heart; I mean Dr. Robert Knox, of Burke and Hare notoriety. Knox had a lofty and highly intellectual forehead; but his eye was the eye of a satyr, and his lower face, as was said by Hall about some person or other, seemed the "rendezvous of all the vices." His manners were exceedingly insinuating, courteous almost to a fault; and suggested the suspicion of insincerity. And yet I believe him to have been a kind-hearted, and certainly he was a very obliging, man. He would not pass a piece of bread on the street without picking it up and giving it to the poor. He was, I think, a materialist in theory, although he often talked like a Christian. He once boasted to a worthy dissenting minister that he possessed what divines called *assurance*; and that on account of the pain he had eased, etc., he believed that God would accept him at last. When this was mentioned to Dr. Ritchie of Edinburgh, he said: "Assurance has he, say ye? I think he *has*." Knox, however, had once his revenge. He was sailing along the Fife coast in a steamer, and keep-

ing a knot of passengers who had surrounded him in a roar of laughter by rather exceptionable talk. Suddenly, when they came off Crail, a boat appeared, conveying from the shore Dr. Ritchie, conspicuous by his broad low-crowned hat and grey hair. "Now, boys," cried Knox, "we must be quiet, for here comes the *Apostle John*!" It might almost have been wished that the profane doctor and the apostle John had set at it tooth and nail. They were well matched in great readiness, coarse wit, power of "jaw," and had almost equal recklessness of assertion. Yet no one could make himself more agreeable in society than Dr. Knox, as he talked or rather lectured with such fluency, ease, intelligence, and distinctness of statement. His knowledge was great, and his views were very decided, while his mode of enunciating them was, for him and them, singularly mild and conciliating. Had they shut their eyes when he was speaking, men might have imagined him a Solon, and ladies fallen in love with him. But *there* was always the sneering, leering lower face. Frequently there was a quiet bitterness like a still stream of gall issuing from his lips, especially when he talked of more successful men than himself, or of men who had been his enemies. His photographs of the medicals in Edinburgh were very graphic and severe. He had a great aversion to Professor Wilson, who had scalped him so

savagely in the "Noctes:" "Very mad now, John! Do you know his last? He was seen lately in his back court, feeding his hens with his hands out of his greatcoat-pocket, which he had stuffed with cold porridge!"

Emerson calls Knox a rash and unsatisfactory writer, but charged with pungent and unforgettable truths. Many have no doubt that he was the pioneer and prophet of the true doctrine of race yet to be developed. By the way, it has of late been conclusively shown that Knox, in his supposed connection with the West Port murders, was grossly maligned and misrepresented.¹

P. J. BAILEY—"FESTUS."

I consider "Festus" the miracle-play of this generation. It is an abyss of bubbling passion, thought and fancy; but like that abyss into which Schiller's diver went down, its motion, wild though it be, is circular, not progressive—

"Like a sea that is labouring the birth of a sea,"

but never bringing it forth. It is a wonderful work. Had the author gone on at this rate he had not been a man, but a monster. But such progres-

¹ See *Life of Robert Knox the Anatomist*, by his pupil and colleague, the late Henry Lonsdale. Macmillan and Co., 1870.

sion was as impossible as that his poem can pass from the memory of men.

I met the author of "Festus" only once, although I knew him well by frequent correspondence. What a contrast to his poem ! It, all fire, he, all calm ; it a wild German-like extravaganza, he a thorough English gentleman ; it now and then exciting suspicions as to its author's sanity—its author, when I knew him, was a quiet, staid, subdued man, of middle age. It is full of wisdom amidst all its wildness, as though its author had thought and studied in an ante-natal state, the author himself speaking in monosyllables of the most commonplace character, "as if he had sold all his thoughts to his bookseller." Yet it seemed much for any man to have survived the birth of a "Festus."

DR. SAMUEL BROWN.

He was a thin, dark youth, with pale, spirit-like face, rapt far-cast look ; nose, brow, and eye not unlike those of Lord Brougham in his youth ; eloquent, palpitating lips ; marvellous fluency of speech ; distinctness of enunciation ; recondite beauty of language, and enthusiasm of delivery. He died ere he was forty, wasted to a skeleton ; and through his

thin environment you fancied you saw the soul putting on its wings for a flight

“Beyond the Solar path and Milky Way.”

Hazlitt calls Cobbett's “Register” a perpetual prospectus. Samuel Brown was a perpetual promise to himself and others—ever renewed to be disappointed, and disappointed to be renewed. A lesser Coleridge, had he lived to his years—sixty-two—or even much longer, he would still have been promising and not fulfilling the promises, each non-fulfilment itself containing in it another promise and even on his deathbed

“Hope would enchanted smile, and wave her golden hair.”

Hope was his heaven ; he had no other here, and you thought he would seek no other hereafter. How beautifully he would paint all the Sciences like so many rivers, meeting at last and mingling in the ocean of ideal Truth. It seemed as if, standing upon a mountain-summit, he saw from afar and described the great confluence !

SYDNEY DOBELL.

Sydney Dobell was a young man of high genius, not so prematurely removed. He began very early to show remarkable powers—to read Locke, and

write good verses at seven years of age. He was instructed chiefly at home. He was not much above twenty when he published a highly successful poem. His heart was, at that time, heaving with lofty ambition to be not only a poet, but a prophetic teacher to the age. These high expectations were not fulfilled; and although fifty and upwards when he died, he died an *undelivered* man. Blake said of Edward Irving: "He is a sent man. But they who are sent go further sometimes than they ought." Dobell went at first too far, and then not far enough. He exhausted himself by his first fierce and hasty run, and when he reached the goal he could not deliver the message; and some said that, like Ahimaaz (2 Samuel xviii.) of old, he had none to deliver. Apart from his lofty genius, Dobell's character was an admirable one, in its combination of childlike innocence, simplicity, earnestness, and disinterested benevolence.

ALEXANDER SMITH.

Alexander Smith, again, if ever he had a message, seems deliberately to have handed it away from him—like a letter misdirected,—and devoted his genius and his time entirely to the work of an

artist—a minor Goethe. Originally, as is well known, a tradesman, he had been patronised by some literary men and clergymen, and became a much more popular poet than Sydney Dobell—second, indeed, in popularity only to Tennyson. His temperament was sensuous, and this gave something of a false flush to his verse, which faded away with early youth; and then it was discovered that the real power behind it was lyrical and descriptive. He described Nature with great gusto and considerable truth; and his reflection of his own youthful passions in the lyrical rhyme of after life was exquisite, and had become as pure as it was powerful. His “Barbara,” for instance, was superior to “Locksley Hall” and to “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship.” It had more than their passion, as much poetry, and was infinitely simpler and sincerer. Alexander Smith died in the year supposed to be fatal to genius—his thirty-seventh—of a fever. It was probably a mercy for him, on many accounts, that he passed away so early. His constitution was spent; and his vein of verse was nearly exhausted. Without being a man of great intellect or powerful character, he was a most genuine poet, wrote delightful prose essays, and was a very honest and genial man.

J. STANYAN BIGG AND T. DAVIDSON OF JEDBURGH.

There was another fine spirit, J. Stanyan Bigg, from the Lake country, who wrote some noble psalm-like blank verse, and some tender little lyrics. Wordsworth highly prized the earlier productions of his genius. He, too, died early; and here, too, it was perhaps as well. "Night" had to some extent come over his "Soul," and a pure and true soul it was. Disappointment in his literary aspirations had not lessened his powers, but had in a measure shaded his happiness. Peace to the memory of poor dear J. Stanyan Bigg!

Another gifted man I knew something of was Thomas Davidson of Jedburgh, who died prematurely, and of a broken heart; but whose "Ariadne in Naxos," inserted by Thackeray in the first volume of the *Cornhill Magazine*, and so much admired by him that he got up an illustration expressly to accompany it, is a piece of pure Grecian art, and ranks nearly beside "Enone" and "Laodamia;" and two or three others of his poems show the finest and truest genius. His letters, recently published, are exceedingly racy and humorous.

THOMAS AIRD.

Thomas Aird is now the patriarch of Scottish poets; and is the best by far living, as well as the oldest. Long may he continue to walk and muse by the banks of the Nith! He has dreamed no dream equal to his "Devil's Dream upon Mount Acksbeck" in power, but many more than equal to it in beauty and pathos. No one has painted Scottish scenery better; and no one has led a life of such a lofty, yet kindly and genial type! It was a feat in existence to unite and harmonise in one man poles seemingly so opposite as the Re-Creator of the Fiend, grim and defiant still as he had been on Niphates Mount—

"And care had long a shadow been in his proud immortal eye,"
and "The Old Bachelor in the Old Scottish Village."¹

BYRON'S "MANFRED," AND MARLOWE'S "FAUSTUS."

I found "Manfred," as Goethe says of it, unbearably oppressive in its gloom. I found myself in a sultry and sombre atmosphere, where I could

¹ The above was written, of course, before Mr. Aird's lamented death, 25th April 1876.

neither breathe nor see. A night of doom seemed to hang over the whole, unrelieved by a single gleam of hope. The mirth, if it could be so called, of Hecate and her fellows is the most dreary element of all. Drama it was none, but rather a lengthened soliloquy, often ungracefully and impertinently interrupted. Compared to Manfred himself, the Abbot was an old dotard, Astarte a shadow, the goat-herd a cipher, and the Devil an ass! How unspeakably sublime, however, as well as beautiful, the Witch of the Alps: she seemed Manfred's real sister; she has all the ethereal beauty of Undine, and immensely more grandeur. As to Manfred himself, he ought to have been absorbed into a cataract, or fixed on an Alpine Horn, or tied to Pilate at the Infernal Lake. What was there to hinder Byron from doing this, instead of bringing in, and then clumsily baffling, the Fiend? The whole poem might have been written in hell—in a hell felt to be eternal; since the misery, which was its inspiration, seemed altogether bottomless. I think that Marlowe's "Faust" revealed a more truly dramatic, more varied, more natural, and more Shakespearean genius. Byron heaved and struggled to rise, and did rise to a very lofty and very awful eminence. Marlowe sprang easily, and at a bound, to a yet giddier but far more ethereal and beautiful height, to a sunny cloud in-

stead of a bald and thunder-split crag; his struggle, like Milton's Angels, is to sink; yet in that he completely succeeds; and in some parts of the play becomes ridiculous and foolish in the extreme. The closing scene has no parallel in weird terror and consummate skill, standing as high in these respects as the closing scene of "Lear" does in pathos.

Milton, I think, must have been familiar with Marlowe's poem—there occurred in it what might be called the very backbone of his Satan;—*Evil, be thou my Good*. But in what snow could not one track Milton's giant foot? To copy Marlowe, however, even Milton had not far to stoop. A finer phantom incomparably than Astarte I thought Marlowe's "Helen"—

"Oh! thou art fairer than the evening air,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand starres!"

A friend told me of seeing "Manfred" performed in London, and assured me that nothing could be more magnificent than the Witch of the Alps developing from the mists of the cataract like a new creation from the soul of genius, and the song of the demons—hundreds in number—around the throne of Ahrimanes. Ah! I should like to have heard that! How many songs he hears from deathbeds; shipwrecks; battle-fields; burning cities; not to speak of the deep diapason of hell. 'Tis a tremendous conception.

SHAKESPEARE'S "OTHELLO."

Surely the jealousy, or rather certainty of guilt, is far too soon excited in Othello's mind.

Jealousy, as Coleridge truly remarks, is not the passion of the play at all.¹ The only jealous person in it is Iago—of his own wife! Othello's passion is the struggle between love and hate; the love of the woman, the hatred of the adulteress; and the enormous strength of both passions in his great heart makes the struggle unspeakably sublime. I think, however, Coleridge refines too much when he says that Othello is to be regarded not as a negro, but as a lofty Moorish chief. Not a negro indeed, but still very black and ungainly, since we hear of his "sooty bosom," "an old black ram." I have often felt deep melancholy when reading the words "Why then, Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice." *Iago*: "Oh no; he goes into Mauritania, and carries with him the fair Desdemona." How dismal that projected journey of the dis-

¹ Coleridge writes as follows;—"Othello must not be considered as a negro, but as a high and chivalrous Moorish chief. Jealousy does not strike me as the point in his character. I take it rather to be an agony that the creature whom he had believed angelic, with whom he had garnered up his heart, and whom he could not help still loving, should be proved impure and worthless. It was the struggle not to love her. It was a moral indignation and regret that virtue should so fall. 'But yet the pity of it, Iago. O Iago, the pity of it, Iago.' There is no ferocity in Othello; his mind is majestic and composed."

appointed and discarded Governor with poor Desdemona in his train to Mauritania ! and yet not worse than what afterwards occurred. I never could understand how Shakespeare had the heart in the circumstances to supplant Othello in his command. Surely he was miserable enough without this. He himself does not seem much to feel the stroke any more than one in the grasp of a boa constrictor would the sting of a newly-born toothache ; but we feel it as a serious aggravation ; and that even Shakespeare has no right to lay on us more than we are able to bear. Wilson in his "Noctes" has shown up a good many small blunders in this transcendent play ; but all these are but drops in the bucket compared to its passion and power. Who can count the bubbles or criticise the shape of the billows of the Maelström as it sucks you down, and sweeps you on, and swallows you up ? If you do not believe, you tremble, and trembling is believing. Yet I find in "Othello" more than perhaps in any of Shakespeare's plays unless "Hamlet," the disagreeable effect of over-familiarity with his fine things. From gems they have become proverbs ; and from proverbs commonplaces ; and they occur in every page, and so thickly as to seem now tame and trite. "Nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice." "Who steals my purse, steals trash," etc. etc. But how the fine, romantic and pictorial

imagination of the mighty poet lurks, so to speak, in every crevice of the story, and every pause of the passion! It follows the main business of the play as a lion does a caravan. Witness the description of the storm in the second Act, and of the strawberry-spotted and charmed handkerchief sewed by the sibyl in her "prophetic fury." Hence perhaps the origin of Coleridge's dictum when he says that "Lear is the most tremendous effort of Shakespeare as a poet, Hamlet as a Philosopher or Meditator, and Othello as the union of the two." But while there is much poetry, and much passion, and much thought in all three, the question is, What is the *predominating* element in each? And there can, we think, be little doubt that in "Lear," as well as in "Macbeth," the leading power is imagination; in "Hamlet" thought; and in "Othello" passion. Had "Othello" united these elements together in equal or nearly equal proportions, it had been a production absolutely superhuman.

"MACBETH."

"Macbeth" is wealthy to extravagance, and shows Shakespeare as a "Croesus in creation;" being wealthy in imagery, wealthy in character, wealthy

in incident, wealthy in blood! It seems a field
fattened by battle—

"How that red rain has made the harvest grow!"

I do not refer to the number or variety of characters. There are but two human characters of much interest; for Banquo, Malcolm, Fleance, etc., are but foils. Macbeth and his Lady are the only two, except the witches, worth anything. But there is a fulness and magnitude of meaning about them quite wonderful. Each of them, as James says of the tongue, is a "*world of iniquity*;" and the iniquity is in each diverse from the other. Macbeth is, in some measure, the instrument of Destiny. His Lady scorns Destiny—is a Destiny herself. She is not the vulgar virago or brutal murderess that many used to think her, nor that "fiend-like queen" Malcolm calls her. She is fierce as a fury, yet calm as fate. She is in the very depths of her crime every inch a Queen; with tender traits too, which have been to the common eye obliterated by blood, but which Shakespeare never forgets—"I have given suck," etc. "Had he not resembled my father as he slept." And I doubt not that she was a kind daughter and an affectionate mother. Her very drugging herself for the deed showed that she did not cease to have feelings which required to be thus indurated. To Macbeth she was true, and after her

manner kind. In the Banquo scene she rises above her husband, and displays real courage and dauntless strength of mind. Her conscience at last awakens, her husband's never does. And it is impressive that while he dies in battle, her remorse, as is fitting in a female who has rebelled against a higher law in her feminine nature than the man possesses, leads to self-murder.

Since writing the above I have read Mrs. Butler on Lady Macbeth. She makes her out to be a masculine-minded female of the sternest type; a woman of whole-hearted wickedness, who never, not even in the sleep-walking scene, feels remorse; "only the unrecognised pressure of her great guilt." I can't understand the difference between this and remorse as expressed in the word "unrecognised," or at least how a "broken heart," which she speaks of, could be without consciousness of guilt! The sleep-walking scene completely confutes Mrs. Butler's theory. You see in it the struggle of the old firmness, and the new-born but terrible remorse. She says: "You a soldier and a-feared!" and yet she cries "Oh! oh!" in such plaintive tones that the doctor exclaims, "The heart is sorely charged." While her own heart is bursting with the agony of her feelings as she thinks of her crime, and sees the old man's blood on her hands, she would yet as before sustain the drooping courage of her lord. She

has indeed no contrition, and no hope of pardon, but this only proves, as Mrs. Butler admits, that there is a remorse which is not repentance. That Shakespeare means to deny her the maternal instinct is not the case, for he makes her say—Mrs. Butler does not venture to quote the words, although she alludes to the passage—

"I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me."

She (Mrs. Butler) says "that Lady Macbeth being overcome by the resemblance of Duncan to her father is a touch of tenderness by which most men would have been overpowered." I humbly think that it is a feeling far more cognate to a woman. She takes no notice of the fact already referred to of Lady Macbeth having to indurate herself, by drugging, for the task of murder. In her address to the "spirits that tend on mortal thought," where she seeks to be "unsexed," she is afraid of the woman within her, which implies that a woman there was; and when she desires to be delivered from "compunctious visitings of Nature," it is obvious that such had been no strangers to her bosom. In one point I think Mrs. Butler right, that Lady Macbeth did not see the ghost of Banquo. She had not been accessory to his murder, but "innocent of the knowledge." Her seeing the ghost would therefore have violated probability and

traditionary belief. But she would not have trembled though she had. She was altogether a stronger character than her husband. But wicked as she was, she was a lady in her carriage and a woman in her death—not perhaps altogether consistent, but there are no consistent characters in Shakespeare or in Nature. How the two terrible unhappy ones cling to each other! They wade through blood, and would wade through hell fire, arm in arm. They may love no one else, but they love one another, and prove that "Love is stronger than Death."

Speaking, as I did above, of Macbeth's Witches, I saw some time ago an etching by Fuseli which struck me as very noble. Two of the countenances were full of fierce and extravagant rage; but one of them, behind the rest, had a look of cool, callous, settled, serene, and half-smiling malignity, which was appalling—all Hell seemed condensed in that terrible countenance. It united the coolness of a Fate with the malice of a Fiend. That horrible hag, I cried, is seeing the end from the beginning; the entire career of Macbeth is before her, and she is gloating over it with a fixed rapture like the smile of a statue. It was a face which, without any incantation but by mere gazing, might eclipse the Moon—so old, so ugly, and so malignant was it! I do not, however, know if any of Shakespeare's

Witches is meant to answer to such a picture. They are too gay and too fanciful; they rather laugh than smile, and are rather apes than demons; they enjoy the fun of the thing; they dance to cheer up Macbeth's spirits; they have Hecate, not Satan, for their ruler and patron; they seem to have no hatred to Macbeth, though he is to be their victim, any more than the fowler hates his birds. As Charles Lamb has it, "they speak in poetry, and vanish to airy music!" They are bubbles, light and evanishing; they are, after Caliban and Ariel, the most completely original emanations of Shakespeare's genius, since he has not only had to make them, but to make a language for them—entirely new; and what a quaint, imaginative, unearthly language it is! The collection of materials in the caldron is marvellous, still more for the ease of the accumulation than for the accumulation itself. With the rapidity of a Puck he plunders all ghastly objects from all quarters of the globe, and serves them up piping hot at the table. Burns's imitation in "Tam o' Shanter" has been much praised, and is excellent, but has one or two forced points, as if the wing of the wild inspiration here and there flagged.

"LEAR."

"Lear" is the wildest of all Shakespeare's plays, and perhaps the most powerful. Its chief elements are madness, folly, crime, brutal cruelty, lust, blood, and unutterable misery, produced by egregious wrong—all coloured by poetry and combined by art into the most magnificent, yet weird and terrible whole. I don't approve of Garrick altering the incident of Cordelia's hanging, but I sincerely regret that it was ever inserted by Shakespeare. It is a "wasteful and ridiculous excess" of woe. I forget if critics have noticed that Lear is represented as a man of intensely poetical temperament from the beginning. His language, when dividing his kingdom, is steeped in poetry; and ere he maddens, many of his words are winged and fiery. Madness, which often changes the tone of the mind, changes Lear from a poet into an erratic, cracked, but very profound philosopher, with a fierce cynicism curling through his utterances. At the close, the furnace subsides into a mere mass of white and crumbling ashes. The pathos of the closing scene has, as far as I know, no equal in the literature of the world, nor in its actual experience, not in any one page of that truth which is stranger than fiction; and in grandeur, what Lamb calls his

"identification of his age with that of the Heavens," it also stands for ever alone. "If yourselves *are old*, make it your cause"—David fleeing from Absalom and reaching the ascent of Mount Olivet, might have used such words in divine inspiration. Was Shakespeare inspired when he put these words into the mouth of Lear? I incline to believe that he was.

"CYMBELINE."

"Cymbeline" is not by a long way the happiest effort of Shakespeare's genius; and betrays, I am tempted to think, in parts, an inferior hand. But there is all the lavish wealth of thought and imagery; there are the inimitable touches of Nature; there are the fine sketches of mountain life; there are the seeming death and burial and dirge of Fidele; and there is, best of all, the scene in the bedchamber of Imogen. Never was a delicate matter so delicately handled; much better than in Tennyson's "Godiva," or Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes." Shakespeare, I think, must have witnessed a similar scene with his own eyes. How generous, too, he is to Jachimo at the close! He spares his life—nay, seems to accept his repentance. On the other hand, the story is clumsy, the plot is

contemptible; the King is a noodle; Cloten and the Queen are vulgar, unpleasing—indeed, monstrous miscreations, and the vision of Posthumus is fantastic and uninteresting.

“VENUS AND ADONIS.”

Read “Venus and Adonis.” What a marvellous production, with high voluptuousness reposing in the arms of young but masculine strength of genius! It is the filthiest of all Shakespeare’s works; but his filth, like all his qualities, is superhuman—it is a naked goddess he unveils. The imagination is as rich as in any of his dramas.

THE PASSIONS OF GREAT MEN.

Had a note anent Shakespeare from Thomas Aird. He says: “If to Shakespeare’s marvellous intellect, moral worth, and prudent skill in the pecuniary business of life, we add his handsome person, we have a completeness of manhood scarcely again to be expected on earth.” True; and yet the Sonnets reveal dimly and dubiously a dark, perhaps disgraceful, passage in his history at one period; probably in youth or early manhood, and which he

seems to have outlived. I don't think the less but the more of him for this.

De Quincey remarks that a strong half-maddening passion is the sure sign of a great nature. Schiller had one for "Laura" which nearly destroyed him. Goethe had several, but after his usual fashion, he turned them into marble, and set them up in his study for artistic purposes! Hazlitt has recorded his own singular hallucination in "Liber Amoris"! Coleridge seems to have had one, to which Shelley refers—

"And thou hast sought in starry eyes
Beams which were never meant for thine,
Another's wealth," etc.

And so, I have heard, had Sir Walter Scott.

Burns had one for Highland Mary, and another for Charlotte Hamilton, to whom he addressed his very last verses—

"Fairest Maid on Devon banks,
Winding Devon, crystal Devon;
Prithee, leave that frown aside,
And smile as thou were wont to do."

Cowper had one, I think, for Lady Austen; De Quincey for Kate Wordsworth—but she was a child, who died early. Shelley had one for Mary Godwin, also for the heroine of "Epipsychidion;" and Byron for Mary Chaworth; not, I think, for Madame Guiccioli. What a strange, fathomless abyss, an

"innermost main," but liable even in its depths to terrible storms, is the human heart! How thankful should men be that even their "passions pass away"—pass from their hearts to be hung up, as still pictures of storm are hung upon the walls, in the chamber of their imagination; and for "years that bring the philosophic mind!"

NOTES ON SHELLEY.

What beautiful lines those of Shelley, written in dejection at Naples! because describing one mood in a manly heroic nature, one of those moments in which man melts down gracefully into the woman, or rather into the "tired child" Shelley here calls himself. Such moods should not be many; and, however few, should not all be recorded, except perhaps in a private journal. But they will occur even in the most courageous natures; perhaps more frequently than in cowardly or colder ones; but are in general suppressed or concealed. What a hapless position that of the poor Man-child in that beautiful boy! Cut off from society, and partly as he felt, for he was no self-deceiver, by his own errors, although mainly by society's misapprehension of him, without any sympathy either with the world's practice or the church's belief, and

loving nature and man to enthusiasm, but deriving little joy or satisfaction therefrom ; regarded as an abject and a wretch by a race he loved and laboured for ; his very genius, the element in which he breathed, underrated or denied by the majority to exist,—visible to the public only in the glare of infamy, and yet with such powers and affections,—’twas a wonder he did not throw himself into the Italian waves which were dissolving in “star-showers” at his feet ! And yet Charles Kingsley sneers at those lines as “womanly,” “girlish,” and so forth. This is contemptible, I think, in *him*. You don’t think less, but more, of Frank Osbaldistone in “Rob Roy,” when, dreaming that he is separated from Diana Vernon for ever, he sits down in the moonlit Highland valley, and sheds the bitterest tears he has shed since childhood. And so I honour Shelley for that shower of shining tears called, “Stanzas written in dejection at Naples.” In horror at sentimentalism these “muscular Christians” would cut up sentiment by the root, and become mere moving statues. What would Kingsley make of the text, “Jesus wept” ? It was not for Himself indeed ; and at the Cross He did not, so far as we know, shed a single tear ; but the words prove that He was no Stoic ; that He was the Son of woman as well as the Son of man !

Was glancing yesterday at some of Shelley’s

letters. In the centre of that Pisan circle of Byrons, Hunts, etc., he sate like a wise child counselling and cementing them; and as soon as he died they split asunder. With all his errors and miseries, my impression grows that Shelley was a good man, as he was unquestionably a sincere one. He was surrounded by a strange set. Hunt, kind and true in the main, was foolish in some points. Mrs. Shelley was then young and inexperienced. Byron was in a large measure depraved. Shelley, in his later years, was a wise, kind-hearted, and true being. His poetry, however, ere he died, became weaker and more mystical than at an earlier period. He wrote latterly for himself, wholly to bleed himself, and he bled with difficulty. He at first composed with great ease, latterly his poetry came forth in slow, wrung-out, fragmentary drops. Mary Godwin Shelley seems to have been a very extraordinary person from her extant correspondence; full of womanhood, good sense, true feeling, along with a wild imagination chastened by a fine natural, classical instinct; she was exceedingly, transcendently kin to Shelley. She bore up bravely under his loss, and her feeling for him, as her "Last Man" testifies, became a mightier passion, mightier but softer, than when he was alive.

NOTES ON BYRON'S LIFE AND LETTERS.

Byron's letters are extraordinary in their distinct sharpness, easy strength, side-glancing insight, elastic, endless, yet usually unelaborate and conversational vigour, dashed off all of them with the utmost rapidity. Poor fellow! He was neither reconciled to the church nor to the world, to himself nor to God! proud, passionate, daring, devious, inspired, wicked, promising schoolboy—that he was to the end. Something in the extreme sharpness and decisiveness of his intellect, more remarkable than even his genius.

Finished Byron's life. What a tragedy! And as if the shadow of the early coffin were not enough, in comes Lady Byron's dreadful letter like a supplementary shadow, leaving the very darkest impression on his memory. Yet she seems to have told the worst to her lawyers. But no lady could have mentioned to men such unutterable things as have been laid to Byron's charge. I think occasional fits of ill temper, leading to cruelty, and a prevailing carelessness, were about the worst of it; and, perhaps, of some of these acts he was himself unconscious, through wine or laudanum, or madness or misery, and might be quite honest in saying that he did not fully know the causes of the separation.

What a blunder Mrs. Stowe's attack on Byron! The poet about the time of his separation was in a state of mind I can very well fancy; his feelings and passions in furious combustion, but his brain quite clear and strong, as indeed it always was even in his wildest humours and darkest hours; his circumstances embarrassed; his temper soured; his tongue "touched with a live coal" from the pit; his whole being inflamed with wine and wretchedness; with little real love, if any, for his wife; with no religious reverence; his wife, a young spoiled heiress, sensible, too sensible, for her years, but with little romance or poetry in her nature, placed beside a human volcano—no wonder though she was scorched, frightened, and ultimately ran away from the flames! Her letters to Mrs. Leigh are exceedingly cautious, well weighed, and even cool. They don't raise her in my estimation. They show a calculation in her fear; an almost Parthian method in her flight; a premature guardedness about her which tempts you to exclaim, "Would thou wert cold or hot!" He has rather risen, she has decidedly sunk, in the recent re-reading of the subject. And as to her defender, I am disposed to apply to her the story told of Dr. William Anderson of Glasgow. A Mrs. M., an itinerant vendor of Atheism diluted down for the vulgar, once visited his chapel, and presented her impudent phiz in

the very front of the gallery. As her object in coming seemed insult, and her look spoke defiance, he commenced *more suo* a fearful attack on her dogma, and concluded by saying, "If I saw a person pretending to be a woman unblushingly advocating such blasphemous and immoral doctrines, I should be strongly tempted to say to her, as a warning to others to keep away from her neighbourhood and avoid her pollution,"—pointing his finger the while over to the lecturer,—“Faugh, how she *smells!*” Coarse, but not too coarse, as directed to a female atheist or a female Beecher.

Madame Guiccioli's "Byron" is a thorough piece of special pleading. There is nothing omitted in his favour that can possibly be said, and all charges against him are denied or mitigated. The worst and weakest thing in it is, that it seeks to make him a consistent character. Now if Byron was anything, he was fragmentary, changeable, Protean; and hence he seemed so many different things to different people and at different times.

PROFESSOR WILSON.

What a loss Wilson is to Scotland! What a broad sunshine he flung around him on the very

street, in his class-room, and in the monthly issues of *Blackwood*. Men felt in these days, "Christopher North is somewhere just now catering for our amusement, instruction, and pleasure, preparing by his 'Recreations' for ours, walking to and fro a large embodied light in some part or other of the favoured land." All this is now over. North too lifted up on the whole an unsectarian banner. Now great portions of Scotland and Edinburgh are, or were, doing all they can to insulate themselves behind a rampart of belated dogmatism or fanatical delirium—

"Oh for the golden prime
Of good Professor Wilson!"

Christopher North was certainly a rare phenomenon. His great curse was his wealth—in his youth his material wealth, and in his later years his mental wealth. Had he been a poorer man in his youth, he had been more consecutive in his culture; had he been less rich and fertile in mental resources in his manhood, he had been more artistic and careful in his compositions, had learned to husband and concentrate. His religious creed was very uncertain; his habits were at no time austere; and his heart, though hot and irritable, was large and generous. His life has never been adequately written, nor ever will. There are a hundred floating anecdotes about

him, however, which ought to be winnowed and preserved.

Read C. North on Dr. Kitchener in *Blackwood* for 1827. One passage describing lawless and abandoned characters in the country, as contradistinguished from those in the town, is tremendous, a passage plucked raw and bleeding from the very bowels of life. It is Crabbe seven times heated; coarse but most picturesque and powerful.

SIR WALTER SCOTT COMPARED WITH LYTTON,
HUGO, AND THACKERAY.

That chapter in "Kenilworth" describing Hugh Robsart's illness is one of the best in all Scott's writings for true pathos and nature. What a comfort such a writer in a world like this! It is like looking away to a "new earth" other than ours, but similar, or like gazing from the upper flat of a house in a city on the distant country, the fields, woods, and mountains. Scott is less modern in his thought than Lord Lytton; wonderfully so to belong to the same section of the same Century. Lytton's Novels start, almost every one of them, the great Age difficulties, and obscure questions of religion and philosophy; hence I like them both for different

reasons,—Lytton for stimulating my mind, Scott for soothing it. Lytton, more than most novelists, makes me think; Scott makes me enjoy, muse, and dream.

Have been reading Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables." Splendid tale, but there is too much of the Ghoul in Victor Hugo's mind and manner. I fear these Frenchmen are aiding our Sensationalists in poisoning taste and injuring morality, although they do sometimes the Shakespearean and Christian work of showing in evil its inner soul of goodness. The superiority of Scott in his novels seems to lie mainly in his uniformly healthy tone and his naturalness; in his never pushing too far or overdoing the sensational matter, and in his filling up the inter-spaces with good sense, fine description, and poetical imagery. He always interests, but seldom fatigues or tortures with interest. He makes human beings, but never heroes, out of the bad or the dubious—pities but never admires men *merely* for their misfortunes and vices, and never worships, as Victor Hugo sometimes does, *Cloacina* instead of *Clio*.

Have been reading Thackeray's "Newcomes." A vast deal of twaddle in it, rendered readable only by a tinge of venom. It has not a tittle of the power of "Vanity Fair." Plot there is none, interest

in the incidents none ; the characters have little vividness of portraiture, unless it be old Newcome himself, and the whole is spun out to a wearisome and needless length.

Again reading "Ivanhoe," which I had laid aside till finishing "The Newcomes." Ah! this is writing; here is the sublime of fiction ; here are passion and poetry. Avast! ye fashionable herd, ye Lady Kews and Barnes Newcomes, and Mrs. Mackenzies, admirably painted no doubt, as are also Morland's apes and pigs, and leeze me on bold Robin Hood, honest Friar Tuck, witty Wamba, and great and gallant Cœur de Lion. There may be something melodramatic in the scenes between Rebecca and the Templar; but what a noble trial piece is hers before the Grand Master!—for moral grandeur unequalled ; and what a divine hymn : "When Israel of the Lord beloved!" Thackeray laughed at some of the weak points of this novel, but could not have written the worst of them.

Thackeray died in his bed, only fifty-two. He was a minor "Scourge of God," the Attila of fashionable life. He lashed alike flesh and bone to ribbons. His blows were all aimed at vital parts ; at the head and the heart ; at heartless heads and headless hearts. Amazingly clever, almost terrible in his power of incarnate invective and living satire ; for his satire was more than that of many novelists

woven into characters; he was seldom, in writing, amiable, scarcely great; and had in his works little *bonhomie*, and less poetry. He stood much of his life under the shadow of a sad event—the derangement of his wife, as under an Upas-tree. He found some relief, however, in an attachment the most devoted to his mother. I heard him lecture once, and liked the lecture better than the lecturer. I thought him dry as a demonstrator; imperious as a lord; distant as a snowy mountain top. He must now be herding somewhere near Juvenal, Swift, and Junius in the other world. Peace to his strong, stern, Saturnine shade! He was not what the newspapers are calling him, the best novelist of the day. Lytton is of a higher aim and order; Dickens richer and more genial.

CERVANTES—"DON QUIXOTE."

"Don Quixote" is the most romantic and ideal narrative in the world. Poetry, the aiming at a higher life and a nobler world than this; the effort "to bring the fled-flown Muses back to man," steeps its every line, inspires its every character. As Christianity is revealed in all its glory by the contrast between it and the pallid and thorn-crowned Crucified One, so Chivalry, which is the flower of

Christianity, as Christianity is the flower of Nature, is glorified in the sorrowful face, battered armour, and shallow helmet of the Knight of La Mancha, whose disinterestedness, valour, and nobility and benevolence make him *the* Christian next to Christ. Nothing tests a man more thoroughly than his opinion of "Don Quixote." How highly the divine Shelley appreciated it! How much the half-god half-demon Byron underrates it! Hazlitt too has here hit the truth. To compare it for a moment with "Hudibras" is preposterous. "Hudibras" is a vulgar caricature of its worst parts; and while full of wit has no imagination.

TENNYSON—"IN MEMORIAM."

Its great fault is a kind of elaborate obscurity. In dealing with some of the dark things or themes he touches, he seems to act as Princess Parizade did in the Eastern tale; he stuffs his ear with some species of poetical cotton, so that the terrible voices come softly upon it and produce rather a sad delicious luxury than that burdened feeling which excites to wrestling agony against them, and the evils they indicate. If we seek a system in the poem, we seek in vain—only beautiful glimpses. Even the rainbow is not a complete circle, merely

the half of one ; but here we have only intense bits of rainbows ; scattered and glittering tears, with blue gulf-like Juno's eyes shining between them, such as "Our little systems have their day," etc. etc.

In Tennyson's new volume the smaller pieces are chiefly pretty trifles ; and had they appeared as from a thousand and one poets of the day, would never have been heard of. "Boadicea" seems to have some occult power in it, but it is on the whole a spasm of the pre-Raphaelite type. It is Demosthenes at his stuttering stage,—you hear the pebbles in the mouth, not the ocean. He calls it an experiment, and it is so, and, like Southey's "Vision of Judgment," it is abortive, and not to be repeated. How inferior to Cowper's grand old ode !—

"When the British warrior-Queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought with an indignant mien
Counsel of her country's Gods."

"Enoch Arden" is a simple story, elaborately careless in style and versification, with one highly-finished passage describing island scenery within the tropics ; and one or two of Tennyson's very best touches. Its style reminds one pleasantly of "Dora." The book seems on the whole Wordsworth with less weight, and less profound reflection. "Aylmer's Field" I like better. It has greater richness of imagery, and a deeper and still more melancholy

interest. There is an artifice and eternal polishing about all Tennyson's writings. He never gets into the full swing of song; never forgets that he is the Laureate "painting for immortality." How cool he is at it too! Michael Angelo had somewhat different feelings when fiercely hewing at his marble,—a cataract of power, with a spray of stone rising around him. Yet he too wrought as an artist, as well as a man of genius.

Tennyson has some verses to-day in reference to a spiteful letter received by him from some poet, who thinks more of himself than of the Laureate. The verses are fine, but the thing should not have been done. If the poet who wrote the letter was a mere nothing, he was beneath Tennyson's notice. If a man of genius in a splenetic mood, that mood in its reaction would avenge itself, and the Laureate! If a man of genius permanently splenetic, that should have moved Tennyson's compassion and silence. The inference will now be that Tennyson has felt the letter keenly, and thrown out, but not off, the feeling by the verses.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Browning reminds me a good deal of David Scott, the Painter. With really an original vein, he

must contort it into the strangest shapes. He is a cramped Caliban—"I am not Caliban, but a cramp." He must, if not see, at least say everything in a peculiar way. His English is as hard as Sanscrit. There ought to be a Browning Dictionary, compiled by himself. His style resembles that kind of inverted and mysterious penmanship in which some indulge. He is more perplexed, crabbed, and absurdly ingenious than the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. I believe each of his poems has a key; but it is a separate one, able only to open one lock; and we do not like the burden of a whole bunch of keys while wandering in the palace of poetry! Yet as to some tastes nothing gives such tart and tingling delight as the sloe and the raw onion, so there are those who relish nothing so much as the sour austerities of Browning. Still there is much wild beauty withal in his writings, like the blue purple bloom of the sloe-berries, and the fine blossom of the sloe-tree.

N.B.—Neither Leigh Hunt nor Carlyle, while they loved Browning as a friend, and admired him as a humorist, cared anything, I believe, for his poetry. "Paracelsus" has manly and powerful passages, and his "Prospice" is very fine.

J. RUSKIN.

Have been reading selections from Ruskin's works with deep though mingled feelings. He is now one of the most eloquent, and now one of the most fatiguing, of writers ; nay, often both at once ; most fatiguing when most eloquent. He gallops his horses downhill as well as up, at the pace of the whirlwind. Sometimes his afflatus bears with it a weight of fine thought, and anon it is a rushing mighty wind of Nothing ! He occasionally indites sheer nonsense ; and is guilty of tasteless exaggeration, here and there almost incredible. Many of his most laboured passages are his worst ; and have a hollow ring under them, while some of his simpler, such as his picture of Turner's death, are exceedingly beautiful. I desiderate anything like certainty in many of his opinions ; and in much of his writing suspect insincerity occasionally ; and am sure of a weakness, if not of a crack, pervading the whole. His thought, shorn of its winged lightnings of fancy and vast exuberance of verbiage, is often commonplace or absurd ; and, generally speaking, there are not many memorable things, although there are many quotable passages, in his works. He seems almost always to be looking at Nature through an exaggerative Brobdingnagian medium,

like those who, having eaten a poisonous species of fungus, feel as if they would require a running leap to clear a straw lying on the ground; and with all his pretensions to pre-Raphaelitism he often heaps the characteristics of various scenes into one picture, till it becomes glaringly unnatural. But then what a spirit, life, fire, enthusiasm for Nature and for pictures—rapturous analysis, inflamed mountain statistics, rushing waves of rhetoric, sentences evolving endlessly—like infinities; the author riding a Pegasus without reins, stirrup, or bridle, careering over the deserts of the earth, and the deeper deserts of the sky; and reminding you of the line in “Festus,” “rough riding this over Switzerland.” Yet how decidedly inferior in the poetry of natural description to Wordsworth; in the picturesqueness of it to Scott; and in the passion of it to Christopher North!

SAMUEL BROWN—FARADAY.

Am reading Samuel Brown’s “Essays.” A little flippant, and sometimes wilfully peculiar and over-erudite in style, they reveal qualities of brilliance, swift insight, and marvellous elasticity and ingenuity which, had life been spared, would have made him a unique expounder of the more recon-

dite parts of Science. His loss in this respect is irreparable. A great discoverer I doubt if he ever would have been. He bent facts to his idea, not his idea to facts. "The facts are against your theory, so much the worse for the facts." That was to some extent the essence and the error of his philosophy. In short, he was not a philosopher, but an orator and a poet.

How seldom has there been a thorough and well-balanced combination of a great original thinker and a poet! unless in Plato, Bacon, Berkeley, and Burke—scarcely one. Milton's originality and power of thought were great, but not at all in proportion to his genius. Coleridge, ere he could become the truncated though powerful metaphysician that he was, had to sacrifice his vein of poetic fancy, a beautiful filleted victim, upon the altar of his intellect. He thus writes from Keswick to Godwin: "I look at the mountains (that visible God Almighty that looks in at all my windows) only for the sake of their outlines; the stars, as I behold them, form themselves into triangles; and my hands are scarred with scratches from a cat, whose back I was rubbing in the dark, in order to see whether the sparks in it were refrangible by a prism!" How characteristic this, and descriptive of the disenchantment of science. Coleridge, the

poet, would have been contented to see the phosphoric light ; but as a scientist, he must approach too near with his prism, and get scratched for his pains ! Yet the page on which he speaks of this process of “ intellectual exsiccation ” actually swarms with poetic images, which shows the difficulty with which he made the sacrifice, and the pity that he did make it, or try to make it at all ; on the other hand, the majority of philosophers—Aristotle, Hobbes, Edwards, Locke, Spinoza, and Kant—have been cold and dry as granite boulders.

Faraday was one of the few happy, because thoroughly well-balanced men. His life has greatly interested me, not only in its positive achievements, but in his grand glimpses—those momentary vistas or tracks of speculation which opened on him as he pursued his path like those “ glades mild opening to the golden day ; ” then closing in again indeed, but after having given the most thrilling suggestions. Samuel Brown had many of these too. “ We shall have gold in a fortnight,” he said once to his assistant, after some startling fact had revealed itself. But he allowed himself to be deceived often,—Faraday never. His idea of *force* as invisible, intangible, ethereal, propagating itself to the ends of the universe, of force as a unity, led to the idea of force being possibly God, the Living God, behind and

around and within all matter, and creating the universe every moment. Faraday was even an alchemist in his youth ; but seems latterly to have forsaken the golden dream. Altogether, a noble, pious, true-hearted man. It was charming, I believe, to see him conducting family worship in the old Scottish fashion in a family in Scotland, and becoming a little child as he read a Psalm or one of Christ's beautiful utterances in the Gospels, in quiet, simple, reverential tones. Men of science present were awe-struck ; Christians overjoyed.

HAWTHORNE'S "SCARLET LETTER" AND IRVING'S
"TALES OF A TRAVELLER."

Nathaniel Hawthorne has left one book which may long commemorate his name, one ineffaceable mark on Fame's immortal page,—“The Scarlet Letter.” It is the true tragedy of Remorse ; and what a painstaking, lingering, long-drawn-out and harrowing tragedy it is ! There is but one key, but on that key there are a thousand vibrations. Pure moral terror keeps you from tiring of the fell monotone of misery which constitutes the book. You believe and tremble, loathe and follow, till the baying of the bloodhound pursuing the unhappy man dies away in satiated vengeance. It is a distinct though

far from pleasing creation to which you never dream of recurring ; one reading of such a book you feel to be enough in a lifetime. For there is not, as in the case of "The Bride of Lammermoor" and similar productions, any relief, any humour, any silver lining on the night. The scenery around is in dreadful keeping with the subject ; and the child Pearl adds only a ghastly lustre, like the light of putrefaction to the dark and morbid ground-work amidst which she appears. After all, the man of one book is in two senses of the term, the man ! I like, indeed, some of his "Twice-told Tales ;" but I don't like his "Transformation" at all. I think it an eloquent and ingenious abortion.

Washington Irving's "Tales of a Traveller" are not only feebler but coarser than his other works. He gives us not only scraps, but dirty scraps too. Such a passage in human life as his "Young Robber," even if true or founded on fact, should be veiled. The American parts are, as always with him, the best ; but in the management of mystery he yields to Poe ; in the power of panic terror to Brockden Brown ; and in deep, pensive sentiment, forming a border round weird and wonderful stories, to Hawthorne ; and has altogether a shallower though sweeter nature than any of the three. He has written nothing in originality comparable to "The

Raven;" "The Scarlet Letter;" or to "Edgar Huntly;" "Wieland;" and "Arthur Mervyn;" although in humour, gracefulness, and natural description he is on his own soil unmatched.

MRS. E. B. BROWNING.

Mrs. Browning's description of Paley in the closing part of "Aurora Leigh" is excessively, luxuriously beautiful—

"Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies."

It seems clear that Mrs. Browning, up to the date of her marriage, was not a happy person. There is a yearning in her for a friend, lover, husband, like that of Frankenstein's man—miscreation for a mate! She feels herself powerful, but is alone, like Minerva, that sublimest of old maids, wisest, not happiest, of the Celestial Sisterhood. Women cannot do the sublime, or at least have very seldom reached it.

"I don't call Sappho's ode a good example,"

Byron might well have said, with another reference than that he intends. Deborah indeed rises to the very highest pitch of sublimity; but it is very doubtful if the ode be a woman's. To name Hannah More, Miss Landon, or even Mrs. Hemans in the same sentence with the word sublime, were absurd. Madame de Staël rises occasionally to it; once in her

"Germany," in that fine passage on the feeling of the Infinite ; and once or twice in her "Corinne," as in her description of Rome, and her anticipation of Byron's thought about the ocean—

"Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow,
Such as Creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now."

But usually, as Hall says, "She does not rise so high, as she prefers a cloudy atmosphere." Mrs. Shelley in her "Frankenstein" and "Last Man" is unquestionably sublime, but as unquestionably morbid. Mrs. Browning is now and then sublime, but never seems native to its element. She is more at home in more womanly regions ; and her "Drama of Exile" is not to be compared with her "Lady Geraldine's Courtship." Women are great mountain-worshippers ; but, as a rule, poor mountain-climbers, going up through much tribulation with many pants and many ponies ; and they have similar difficulty in climbing the rare summits of the sublime.

GEORGE BEATTIE.

Went to see poor George Beattie's grave, a poet who, stung by a love disappointment, committed suicide on the spot where he now lies. It is an interesting place—the graveyard old and solitary, near the sea, which was to-day serene, with a low

gentle murmur, like a long-subdued sigh, a fine rippling light upon its waters, and to the north, bold craggy cliffs. Picnicked under a rock. Walked along the beach, and up a winding road to the top of the cliffs; the day intolerably hot, the road sandy and slippery, the salt sea air modified by distance, with a great gathering of clouds in the north, portending thunder. Beattie's grave is enclosed with a railing, a marble tablet and inscription, a honeysuckle trailing over it—situation fit for a Poet's last resting-place, between the sea, the sands, the ocean, and the grand crags behind—a ruined church near, he lies a ruin among ruins. Shelley should have been buried as well as burned at the gulf of Spezia. What figure on *his* monument? A skylark arrested in full flight, or an eagle at the point where his utmost verge of soar is reached, and looking yearningly upwards! Beattie was of course a far inferior spirit; but still many pilgrims come from considerable distances to see the spot where

“Neptune weeps for aye o'er his low grave.”

Peace to his memory! He was a genuine child of song and sorrow.

"ROBINSON CRUSOE"—"VICAR OF WAKEFIELD"—
THE QUEEN'S "JOURNAL IN THE HIGHLANDS."

What power lies in a quiet touch ; a suggestive hint ; a whisper ! Hood speaks of the difficulty of "*swearing in a whisper*," although we suspect, were it at all audible, a whispered imprecation would be the most powerful of any. The oaths of conspirators and murderers are usually in whispers. I felt that half silence is often more powerful than whole sound, even were that sound thunder, while reading to-day in "Robinson Crusoe," that wonderful picture of the man's foot upon the sand. Had it been a full-length impression of the Horned Devil it would not have produced a tithe of the effect. It was simply a man's foot, not his own. It is a Shakespearean touch ; nay, I know not if Shakespeare has anything more or so Shakespearean in all his writings. *Ex pede Herculem*. From that foot what a gigantic structure of fear and conjecture does the poor fellow's imagination proceed to pile up ! What painter shall give us his countenance when, as a last resort, he measures the foot by his own, and finds it larger ? The first feeling was that of stupefied surprise ; the next that of dreadful certainty.

Nowhere will be found a clearer statement of the great spiritual difficulties of man, and of the

partial, but as yet sole, remedy the Gospel provides for them, than in the conversations between Crusoe and his man Friday. It is interesting to know that the same burden in almost the same form was, two hundred years ago, resting on thinking spirits as now, and painful to find that we and they have got to the same solution—none whatever! Christianity is mainly a palliative, though it has proved a most precious one. But for some form of religious hope or other, and their instinctive clinging to life, the race might have long ago, under pressure of the burden of thought and care, committed an act of "universal simultaneous suicide."

"Robinson Crusoe" suggests "The Vicar of Wakefield" and "The Arabian Nights," both of which I have also been lately glancing at. The first is the least artistic, and the most delightful, of novels. The huddling together first of misfortunes, and then of deliverances, is extremely awkward and ill-managed. But how exquisite the humour; how natural the characters; how charming the simplicity! It is a simplicity which makes you weep with delight quite as much as does the pathos. How warmly you love the author; all the more that you know what a divine donkey he was! What heart-unconsciousness, sweet-bloodedness were in poor Goldy! Reading "The Arabian Nights," too, has given me

a gush of childish delight, as though I had been reading it for the first time. Felt this especially when reading "Ali Baba." What a truly sensational and intensely romantic story it is! Some one was lately saying that Lust and Magic are the ruling principles in these tales. I think this is far too strong. Domestic virtues are often recognised; noble and virtuous female characters, such as Princess Parizade and the Queen of Beauty in the Second Calendar's Tale, are introduced; manly courage and brave adventure are the inspiration of many of the stories; retribution (this Mr. Waddell admits) often does its work against sin and crime—the lust is the warm passion of youth as found especially in Oriental bosoms, not systematic or seductional, and that the effect of the whole is healthy, is proved by the *universal* acceptance of the book, and so

"Hurrah for the Golden Prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid!"

We have no Haroun Alraschid, but, thank God, we have the Queen! Have just read her book. How refreshing in its simplicity, and what a fine infantine and enthusiastic nature it discovers in her! Her glimpses of her early married life, and her first acquaintance with the Highlands are very beautiful in their exhibition of sincere childish delight and

tender leaning on her husband. No felicitous touches of fancy, no strokes of genius; and you don't miss them! Yet she often describes well from the mere truthfulness of her feelings. Queen's weather and Queen's literature for ever! "God save the Queen!" say we, let others say what they will.

NOTES ON NAPOLEON'S "LIFE OF CÆSAR."

Have been reading Louis Napoleon's "Cæsar." A really great historian is more rare than a great poet. Perhaps only three in the world—Thucydides, Tacitus, and Gibbon; Hume may possibly be added to the list. Macaulay is a brilliant pamphleteer; Carlyle a singing chronicler or scald; Arnold true but hardly great; Livy great but not true; Robertson scarcely either, although pleasing, and in his "History of America" fascinating. DeQuincey might have been one of the greatest, as his "Revolt of the Tartars" proves. M'Crie is a powerful polemic under the guise of a historian. Froude's History is made up of creeping and flying; short flights and long (and sometimes wearisome) rests. Motley is an orator and splendid descriptionist, not a historian. Burke's "Abridgment of English History" shows that he might have been at the very head of British

historians; and parts of it, of his Indian Speeches, and of his "French Revolution" combine the best of oratory and the best of history as no other writer has done.

Cæsar seems to have been a notable *roué*. Most generals have been so, such as Alexander the Great, Marlborough, Napoleon, Wellington, etc. This is partly accounted for, from their supreme authority tempting them to licence, and partly from the high excitement in which they live. Cæsar and Napoleon the First turned their amours to political account. De Quincey discredits that shocking story told by Suetonius about Nicomedes, king of Bithynia, and Cæsar. And yet when we remember William Bankes; the rumours against Lord Byron and Beckford; we may suspend our judgment. By the way, it is strange that Louis Napoleon never, I think, alludes to Niebuhr, De Quincey, or Arnold, all acknowledged authorities in Roman history.

NOTES ON GERMAN WRITERS.

Goethe's "Elective Affinities."—In the commencement dull and didactic as "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," it becomes afterwards fantastically smutty. It has in one place a great many wise observations, as a kind of makeweight or thirteen to the dozen.

In that shrewd worldly wisdom Goethe excelled all men. He was the true "Master of Sentences." Colossal sensualists like Goethe and Solomon make the best Proverbialists. What wisdom as well as wit in "O'Doherty's Maxims;" and yet so far as prudence, economy, self-management, and regular industry go, Maginn was a downright fool. Hazlitt too, not at all a well-conducted or prudent man, has more practical good sense in his writings than any score of his British contemporaries; and his paper on the Conduct of Life, addressed to his son, is one of the best pieces of moral advice in the language.

Read Eckermann's "Goethe." What wisdom I find in these conversations! I am coming nearer to Carlyle's conception of him. He seems almost in body and soul the new Adam of a new and greater race. Yet he had manifold weaknesses. What a bore that Theory of Colours! and how much time wasted with it, and with the stage in these memoirs. But on general subjects how strong! He has a singular remark about Man. He says: "I foresee the time when God will have no more joy in Man, but will break up everything for a new Creation. I conceive that everything is planned for this, and that the time and hour are already fixed." He does not expect this, however, for a considerable period yet. This seems very nearly coincident with Scrip-

ture views. The wonder is, God has not tired of man long ago. And yet he is subserving some good purposes; and were he improving, might be long spared. But it is very difficult coming to any definite conclusion on such a question. In some points of view Man is advancing at a great and irresistible rate. In others, he is stationary or retrograde; "always," as Byron has it, "and always to be an *unlucky rascal*."

In a forgotten and anonymous book, I find the "Faust" thus characterised, somewhat strongly I think: "Its breadth is astonishing, considering its small compass; and it has also some noble poetry. It is a picture of human life given on a piece of canvas of the size of a crown-piece, and very little—that is evil at any rate—is omitted. Fantastic as the design is, all is there. The queer contradictions of human nature—the farce which borders on, or breaks out amidst the tragedy—the soarings and sinkings of Man, in the morning mating with angels in studious contemplation, and spending the night in the most sensual indulgence—the flights of high thoughts like eagles—of soft emotions like doves, and of dark doubts and darker passions like ravens, which cross our sky and perch on our heads continually—the ingrained selfishness of Man's nature working in his love, his hate, his pleasure, and his devotion, mining

in his Hell and colouring the tints of his Heaven—the restlessness and dissatisfaction attending all the movements of his speculative understanding—the bitter burning drop that lies at the bottom of every cup of pleasure, are all faithfully given. 'Tis just a Devil's Dream of Man done into German, and could only have been so well done by one who knew by hearsay, observation, and experience, all the evil that was in man, and to whom for the nonce all power was given, by some demon we suppose, to represent it, but who knew very little of the self-devotion, the disinterestedness, the kindliness, honesty, simplicity, and piety, which are in many of the race. Mephistopheles is a little, unclean, sneering imp who seeks, by applying a microscope to gold, to turn it into mud, and a microscope to mud to turn it into gold. We are always amused at Carlyle's adoration of Goethe. It is characterised by his usual contradiction and paradox. We are told that a negress is now the favourite mistress with the Parisian scamps; and it seems something of a similar spirit which actuates Carlyle's love of Rousseau and Goethe. Tired of our common healthy standards—our Homers, Miltons, and so on, he has taken up, for intellectual dalliance, with books so diverse from his own original nature and taste as 'Wilhelm Meister' and 'The New Heloise,' and drives out his black but comely darlings in that

rushing, thundering chariot of his—to our great amusement at all events!”

Had this writer read Goethe's deliverances in Eckermann, and his “Hermann and Dorothea,” he would have considerably modified his opinion.

Goethe seemed to like the English for all of the German they did *not* have, and to dislike Germany for all its lack of the English element. I suspect that he was more appreciated in his later days by the English than by his own countrymen. I judge from what Dr. Hutchison Stirling says about him, that latterly the Hegelians and the Philosophic and pseudo-earnest schools generally drew off from Goethe's Himalayan altitudes, and liked better to dive into Hegel's bewildering depths. But while he was a sun setting to Germany he was rising to Great Britain; and is shining on here more and more unto the perfect day. How serene yet not cold his utterances in Eckermann! how clear and commanding his point of view!

Shakespeare, Goethe, Byron, and Wilson, seem to have been about the best-looking children of genius in our modern post-Reformation world—pity Wilson has not left proofs sufficient otherwise, of his God-given right to be ranked with the “first Three.” They were all man-like. Shelley was liker a beautiful woman; and so among painters was Raphael. They both seem set in, and looking

at objects through moonlight. Southey and Landor were striking, not sublime-looking men. In Keats his soul protruded from his face—stood out from, did not properly pervade, it. In Coleridge wide and dim vision and dreamy absorption were the main expressions. In Wordsworth a somewhat narrow but profound and brooding intensity, like a star looking down from the zenith into a sunken well—he hardly looked abroad into universality. Hazlitt's look was sidelong, but exceedingly keen; Sir Walter Scott's was broad, but not searching or transfiguring. Carlyle *hurls* his eye at objects in fierce volleys; and all these angles and modes of vision come out in their writings as well as in their faces.

The story of Goethe's "Elective Affinities" is one of intertangled lasciviousness, like a knot of foul toads; but the language is decorous, and close to the firesprings of passion lie masses of clear, icy, but true and deep reflection.

Some of Goethe's later works give you the impression of extreme coldness—the cold of Milton's Hell, where there are frozen as well as fiery Alps.

There are often apparent but seldom any real disparities between a man's character and his works. As a man's imagination is, so is he; as a man's works are, so is his life. The strong manly work proclaims

the strong man. The effeminate writing marks the cultured weakling; the impure conceptions of the book come from the foul fancy of the writer; the satire shows the spirit of the man to be either permanently or temporarily soured; the man halting between two opinions or two ideals, or two plans of life in his conduct, halts as much as in his works. Milton the semi-seraph writes the semi-seraphic epic; Samuel Butler and Swift, the unhappy and disappointed, write caricatures and libels; Thomson, the lazy lover of Nature, writes languid but sincere love-letters to his mistress, and these are "The Seasons." You see Byron's personal defect crippling or convulsing portions of his poems. Christopher North's uncertain position in thought, and his veering political and religious opinions are as visible in the "Noctes" as are his brilliant wit and unequalled fancy. So to describe Schiller's character is to paint his genius.

Schiller was just his own "Diver," lean and strong, fearing no danger and no toil in his search after the Beautiful and the True; nay, loving to seek them in the very depths of the Maelström; and if perishing in the plunge, perishing with the eye of love and the breathless hush of admiration attesting the profound sympathy with which the attempt was regarded. Schiller's poems, like Shelley's, were all sobs—the sobs not of weak protest but of powerful,

if desperate struggle ; and the voice of his wrestling genius often reminds you of the poet's

“ solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.”

What a picture in Jean Paul Richter's “ Flower, Fruit, and Thorn Pieces ” that of Spring ! Read in the depth of winter, it brings into the room the smell of roses, the fragrance of the hay and the birch, and you hear the flutter of flowers. As a white substance spread without before the windows gives you even in summer the feeling and almost the chill of snow, so Jean Paul's descriptions warm you with the breath and cheer you with the gladness of Spring. His night-pictures, too, always take you out with him under the canopy, where he is sure to show you a Moon waning in the east ; large stars burning in the zenith ; some strange clouds like angel-wings stretching athwart the heavens, and a few

“ Meteors of the storms
That plough the dark night with their fiery forms.”

All the Germans in the beginning of the century worshipped Nature as God's chief if not only Revelation, although Goethe worshipped her principally as Beauty ; Schiller partly as this, and partly as Benevolence, saying with Shelley, “ Love is God,” and drinking

“ To the Good Spirit, here 's to Him ! ”

Kant as inexorable moral law ; Richter as the envelope of a higher life, and Novalis as coming to a climax in man, whom he regarded as the true Shekinah.

Have been reading Krummacher ; an amiable, pious, and eloquent man, without any deep insight ; a kind of German Dr. Guthrie, although without Guthrie's theatricalism or pawkiness. He was in his element in the country, and the provincial town he preached in afterwards ; but in Berlin he was not the master-spirit. His sketches of contemporaries are graphic and marvellously generous. No matter how much they differ from him, he always marks their good as well as bad qualities. What a fine free atmosphere there is in Germany ! Neander must have been a fine fellow ; and so was Schleiermacher. Hengstenberg I am tempted to call a half-Popish hierarchical humbug. The Evangelical party seems latterly of rather a small and second-rate class ; unless it be Bunsen, who broke with them finally, although they hold by his hymns still. Bunsen a queer hybrid ; a worshipper of Christ, yet hardly a believer in a Personal God. Christ might have reversed His words to him and said, "Ye believe in me, believe in my Father also." Full of child-like faith and love as a Christian, and yet the most daring of Biblical speculators, and the hero of the

Seven Essayists, too large for the network of the Evangelical Alliance, I love and honour Bunsen. He occupies very much, *magna componere*, etc., my own position in religion,—infinite doubts as to the records; the circumstantials and the *genesis* of Religion; infinite love for Christ, and Christianity as his reflex, for all its grand moral and spiritual elements. Bunsen has many children and a good many bastards among the religionists of the day. He must increase; and Krummacher and his babyish womanish school must decrease. W. belongs essentially to this school, though he has a philosophic instinct which wars continually against it. C. has become one of its members; he should have been something better. They call it the Religion of the Heart, but it should be better ballasted by manly intellect, and should clear itself more openly from some of those dogmas which chill and deaden the affections of Christians. Krummacher's critical views seem absurd and narrow,—a whole century behind. His school in reacting from the chilly spirit and materialising tendencies of Rationalism has also resigned belief in its most assured critical achievements; and calls them "Devil's kitchen-work," which is at once unjust, ungrateful, and unphilosophical. The course of German thought exhibits a curious succession of Chaoses, as in a nightmare; one amorphous form succeeding another,

but never hitherto a Cosmos. If that is ever to be expected, it must be in Britain. Germany throws out the crude and contradictory materials; England should, and may yet, form them into a clear and crystalline whole.

Niebuhr was the accomplished, the bloodhound of history; following the faintest marks, and feeling the dimmest scents of truth; wise too above almost the wisdom of man in political sagacity and foresight, although disappointed with society and soured at life.

Neander was the Hebrew of the Hebrews; the last Father of the Church, nearly a combination of Paul and John; with the learning of the one and the love of the other.

Perthes stood on an eminence which he had reached by effort and toil, and saw not with the eye of unquiet sympathy, nor with the exaggerated eye of fear; but with a still hopeful glance, what De Quincey calls the "billowy" movements of the German mind, to which I refer above; resembling the restless sand-clouds of the desert, or which might be even more fitly compared to those capricious and changeful poms of varied colour—those clouds of purple pursued by gold, and gold melted down into fire, and fire fading into dull grey, which appear in a summer or autumn sky, and which seem tumultuously dancing as they rapidly change around the steadfast though sinking sun.

In Fichte speculation assumed a stern and stoical shape, amounting to sublimity, and anointing those eloquent closing passages of "The Destination of Man" which remind you of the beautiful shapes of snow-covered trees, or of the flowers into which everlasting frost sometimes wreathes itself. Perthes had latterly a kind of hankering after Popery, or some high Ritualistic faith. He perhaps thought a bad form of religion better than no religion at all; but is not an ill-prepared medicine often worse than a poison?

We live in a twilight age; but much depends on whether it be the morning or the evening twilight. We have only a half moon to guide us, but although they strongly resemble each other, there is a great difference between a waning and a waxing moon. Papists and Protestant exclusionists are under the former, Liberal and Progressive Protestants under the latter.

I note a remarkable difference between Perthes's desire for death and Foster's. Foster was anxious to be delivered from the earth-shadows, principally because they clouded himself; Perthes, because they clouded God. The last cry of Foster was essentially that of Goethe;—"Light, more light!" that of Perthes was for more love and humility. Perthes meant, "I will take more light gladly, but I expect it to come hereafter, as it has come here, through the channels of love and lowliness."

The one was the cry of a man who had through light learned to love God to the extent he did love Him, which was not great; the other of one who had seen God through the atmosphere of love. The wish of Foster was more that of a baffled but not altogether hopeless man of genius; the wish of Perthes was more that of a yearning child looking toward the wall of his nursery, warmed by the radiance of the unseen sun, and eagerly expecting more light and heat, when his father shall throw open the casement. Good Jacobsen wished—but the wish was not granted—to die slowly, and to know all about death. Perthes, if he ever had such a desire, was gratified. He tasted the cup drop by drop. He lay, even in anguish, calmly confronting and studying the great fact of death; knowing it was the first and the last opportunity he had of seeing it, just as one passing through a rugged chasm of rocks and gloom darts his eye the more eagerly at it, that scenes of a very different kind, of beauty and summer flowers, are near, and already looming before his imagination. Perthes felt that Nature at most proves a mind indefinitely great and partially benevolent, but neither a Being absolutely good, nor an Infinite Mind,—these qualities must be gathered from other quarters and considerations. Perthes was what Coleridge called a good in contradistinction from a goody man. Let me try to

make apparent what the difference is. A good man, then, I think, is one whose goodness is unpretentious, who wears it as a humble though comely garment, not as a flaunting scarlet robe; a goody man is proud of his small virtues and decorums, and his look seems to ask at every one he meets, "Don't you know me, Mr. So-and-so, the celebrated goody man?" The good man has his faults and errors, and does not seek to disguise them, feeling that the acknowledgment of an error is a pledge of sustained effort to get rid of it,—nay, is that effort begun; the goody man has reached a sort of stunted perfection, the sun of his virtue is so small that its spots are hardly visible, and the faults he has he dexterously hides under loud-sounding professions, and a great outcry against the same as they occur in the lives of others. A good man is largely charitable to others, while often sternly condemnatory of himself; a goody man has little approbation or charity to spare for any except himself, other goody men, or those rich and great personages who, if not goody men themselves, have a respect for those that are. A good man usually has nothing particular to distinguish him in his dress, manners, or mode of speech; a goody man, wishing to be observed in every stage of his way to Heaven, elongates his countenance, and solemnises his style of talk till it sounds like the echo of the earth

dropping into a tomb. The good man sometimes does imprudent, or says daring things, which make the world stare ; and the goody man to lift up his eyes and whisper, "I always thought men were mistaken in him ; he has now shown himself in his true colours !" The good man, when he hears of some glaring transgression, is rendered miserable, and sighs as he says, "What a sad pity !" the goody man secretly rejoices, though he gives a sham sigh too as he exclaims, "What a scandal ! what a burning shame !" The goody man has peculiar tastes and sentiments ; he prefers Addison's character to Steele's, and Blackmore's to both ; if by a strange chance he be a freethinker, he prefers Hume, Combe, and J. S. Mill to Rousseau and Shelley ; if a believer, he thinks Calvin far superior to Luther ; shakes his head when you speak of Edward Irving, and adores Lord Shaftesbury. Out of good men have come martyrs, poets of the true breed, modest philanthropists, and many hard-working ministers and missionaries ; and out of goody men have come noble Chairmen of Bible Societies, organisers of soup-kitchens, Lord Provosts, and Doctors of Divinity all the world over.

SPINOZA.

Am reading Spinoza's "Tractatus Theologicus." His mind, as revealed in it, is of a calm, clear, colossal character, not only flowerless, but of a nature to which the use of flowers of speech is as alien as a belief in miracles,—yet with a masterly depth and a grim severity of logic. He is too dogmatic, and is altogether more a seer than a poet. Plato was a seer *plus* poet; and so was Bacon. Spinoza rather resembled Aristotle in strength and clearness, although not in compression. Some one speaks of dry light; Spinoza's is double dried, the sun of Sahara! How different from the inspired magnates of his race—Isaiah, David, Ezekiel, John—is this great Sadducee of the Sadducees! He seems the very inversion of the dreaming Daniel. Not only do miracles and prophecies resolve themselves with him into natural events, but the beauties and glories of Nature disappear in their unseen Cause; it is not the star he sees, it is the congeries of laws which it represents; it is the great skeleton of the universe stripped of foliage, light, and warmth, which stands up before him a shadow as well as a skeleton. His works seem the cold jelly in which the meteor of the Hebrew genius spent itself. Paul possessed analytic

and logical power, coupled, however, with a passionate and lyrical nature ; but Spinoza is *Old Analysis* himself. Yet it is impossible to deny him, besides prodigious penetration, thorough-going honesty. His very inability to sympathise with the imagination, the enthusiasm, and the appetite for the marvellous which distinguished his countrymen, led him to do more justice to the moral elements in their writings with which he *could* sympathise. His piety proceeded not so much from the heart as from the legal and orderly character of his genius, which reminds us, in some points, of Moses, although it is of a much colder cast. With the childlike and benevolent spirit of Christ Spinoza was less *en rapport*, although he acknowledges the spirituality and universality of Christ's precepts. Moses says "God is Fire," Christ says "God is Love," Spinoza says "God is Law, and Law is God."¹ Spinoza did undoubtedly tend to Pantheism, *i.e.* to the absolute unity of substance as the great dim substratum of all appearances ; a unity, however, assuming a certain triune aspect, as Life, Law, and Mind ; these three being diverse but one. If this conception seem to the intellect more

¹ Renan, in his noble address delivered on the unveiling of the Spinoza statue at The Hague on the 21st February 1877, defines Spinoza's system as the deifying of the Universal Consciousness or Absolute Thought. This is the everlasting ideal, the eternal yet flexible background to all being. This is not materially different from my rendering ; for this may be called the invisible Law of Laws, Life of Life, Mind of Mind.

true-seeming, it has not the claim upon the heart which the Christian truth of a Universal Father has. There are three thoughts suggested by these three different theories: the first is, impartial indifference to persons on the part of the Supreme Substance; the second, partial and limited Love; and the third, universal Benevolence. I am not sure but the first of these, the Pantheistic idea, is more pleasing, and tends more to true morality than the second. But surely the third, although attended by enormous difficulties, is far more cheering. It is a sublime thought, that of the Divine Idea giving without love; withholding or punishing without hatred; contemplating the race rather than the individual, the whole than the parts, and pursuing its own dignified and inscrutable path in eternal silence. But surely better far the thought of God hiding Himself with a view to future revelation; biding His time, and preparing for men, even for the rebellious, as He has done in part already, the gift of a glorious surprise.

Evangelicalism has certainly some very strong points. Apart from its age, its past triumphs, and the great amount of undeniable good it is doing, it offers a kind of certainty and security to which men, and especially women, are fain to cling, and a security which is not quite destroyed even though the other theories should be true. Should Spinoza's

dream be the truth, the believer can only sink, spent and lost, in the same blind ocean with the rest of mankind. If all are to be saved, he will of course. If only a few are, he has the best of chances—a chance which is increased into certainty, as he thinks, in the case of many of those religionists, who hold assurance, as well as in that of the Papist. And hence the popularity of these creeds with a vast number of men, women, and children, who like the shortest cut to Heaven, and think the shortest the securest. Where there is no doubt as to Religion, there is seldom any as to outward morality; and thus the votaries of unhesitating creeds are usually correct, and often zealous, in conduct. Unquestionably, too, the element of childlike submission, which implicit faith implies, often exerts a beneficial effect as the teacher of humility; and in general, though not always, of sincerity. On the other hand, evangelical security is often apt to lead to uncharitableness; to dogmatism; and to narrow-mindedness: with some, to efforts at proselytising of that Pharisaic type which Christ denounces, and with others, to selfish isolation or fierce fanaticism. At present it is beat at terribly; and beginning to be so, even in Scotland, by the tempests of the times.

Some one says “Kant is positive, Spinoza negative.” As to Kant, this is doubtful. Hall calls his

system a system of Atheism, and De Quincey accuses him of denying Immortality, of even looking forward with complacency to rotting for ever. But at all events Spinoza is no Negativist. He does indeed, what he deems, some needful negative work as a preliminary; but his chief aim, after getting rid of the beggarly elements, is to fasten on certain great unchangeable principles. Suppose he identified God with Law—that Law to him never ceased to be divine, and he only substituted for the words “the Lawgiver,” the more accurate and profound ones, “the lawgiving God.” Spinoza believed that laws, like light and other forms of matter, were perpetually pouring out from a present God, as from a fountain, and that it was in this sense that God was the living God. Besides, he repeatedly acknowledges the divine authority of Moses.

Goethe's testimony to the influence of Spinoza upon him is very valuable. It was this that taught him—after the first Wertherian fever of his young soul was spent; and after, by writing the “Faust,” he had cast the Mephistophelic skin of Indifferentism, starred and fretted with poetic scorn and despair—that sublime calm which settled on him early, and continued with him during life. Spinoza taught him the vanity and transitoriness of the

Phenomenon, and the everlasting endurance and no less perpetual mystery of the *Noumenon*. The Arabian caliph had inscribed on his signet, "*This also shall pass away*;" and he lifted and looked at it alike in his moments of trial and of triumph, so that he was never elated and never depressed. Spinoza used a similar formula, and lifted up a similar signet to all shows, however ancient and august, which were not substances; and his object was ever to pierce to the Enduring, which he found, instead of a gulf, a wall—a wall of black though not frowning marble; for Immobility is always calm, and Eternity has no passions, no hatred or contempt; only silence. The thunders howl along the outer wall of Heaven; the inner Shrine of the Gods is for ever calm; and there Spinoza, and after him Goethe, desired to dwell and find their rest. Spinoza succeeded, so far as his life was concerned, in enacting his belief; but as to Goethe there are in Lewes's life of him indications that, with all his gifts and sublime composure and matchless bodily constitution, there was a deep quiet misery in his heart; the scarf by which he concealed the wound was ample and splendid; but the wound was there, and he sought and found for it no balm in Gilead, no physician in God! But how far this may be attributed to his system of belief, and how far to the looseness if

not licentiousness of his life, it is difficult to decide.

Goethe says, "Such men (as Spinoza) convince themselves of the Eternal, the Necessary, and of Immutable Law, and seek to form to themselves ideas which are incorruptible, nay, which observation of the Perishable does not shake, but rather confirms." And he shows how acquaintance with their systems led him to serenity, and to that self-renunciation on which he laid so much stress alike in literature, in speculation, and in life—stress, I think, to some extent theoretical.

NOTES ON RENAN'S "LIFE OF JESUS."

Have read part of Renan ; I am not satisfied on one side or other. There is a sad uncertainty on the whole subject ; and dogmatism on either side is but another name for blustering doubt. He writes in a good spirit ; and the burning of his book on the Continent in many places is simply disgraceful, and tells tales about the cowardly Jesuitism which there passes for Christianity. The reducing however by Colenso, Renan, etc., of Scripture to a kind of palimpsest, with continual erasures, alterations, additions, interlineations, and suppressions, must in the course of time somewhat lessen its aggregate

value and veracity. And yet the tendency of criticism is all that way. Well ! there are still innumerable most precious fragments of truth, gems of the brightest lustre, to be found in this strangely compounded structure ; and perhaps after we ascertain more exactly the human element, the Divine truth and poetic beauty will shine forth in greater glory.

Renan's view of Christ feeling His identity with his Heavenly Father is very beautiful. "For some months, nay, one year, God was on this earth." It is, however, not pleasing to trace, as he does, the imaginary process by which the sublime Being went further from His Father. According to Renan, Christ's Egoism, at first identification with God, became ultimately self-assertion and a claiming of Divine power and Divine prerogatives. The process imagined by Renan in Christ has been, alas ! realised by many noble spirits, who have begun by worshipping and loving themselves in their Art or Science, or in Nature, and ended as self-idolaters, passing from children to charlatans. Thus did Paracelsus, and even in some measure Edward Irving and Wordsworth, and many more. Not so Spinoza, Newton, Chalmers, or Shelley. No ! I cannot believe such a degeneracy ever could have come over Christ.

It is to me at times a confounding reflection, *if*

Christ did not return as He seems to have promised, and as His disciples expected. It looks as if He had not been able to redeem His pledge, like that friend of Franklin who promised to come back after death and tell him all about the future state, but never came.

Supposing Christ to have arisen only from some mesmeric slumber, and never to have ascended at all,—question, What became of Him? Did He return to the wilderness, or what? Why did He not rather, flushed with His escape from His foes, put Himself at the head of His disciples and proclaim Himself the Messiah? This theory therefore is untenable; and you are driven to one of the three others—that the tradition of the Jews about the stealing of His body by His disciples is true; or that the imaginations of His disciples were so impressed as to fancy they saw Him after death; or that the Scripture narrative is in all points the correct one. And yet to all these, weighty objections may be urged; and in reference to any of them, dogmatism is offensive and absolute certainty impossible. To *believe* is one thing, to prove another.

Renan is certainly an earnest and good if mistaken man. His tone is elevated, and his sentiments are as refined as his style. But I cannot realise his Christ; and I see some very weak points in his history of Him. His account of the raising of Lazarus

is positively contemptible. There is a melancholy tone in his book, which makes it sound like the dirge of Jesus. The contrast he sees between Christ and modern men makes him very sad. But I wonder he is not sadder still, when he looks at the Sun he has shorn of so many of his beams, of his supernatural powers, miracles, and to some extent, of his personal perfections. These have been by us so long identified with Christ, that when stripped of them He looks new, naked, and bare, like a winter tree. Nor does He in Renan's version seem one whit more intelligible than in the common one. If no longer in our sense the God-man, he is still the Man-mystery.

Some Frenchman has been writing about Renan's book, and calling it weak, worth nothing save for style, and even that "too sweet." This is the old device of orthodox divines to affect to see no merit in any writer who opposes their views, or is above them. Conceive a poor man declaring that he never uses pine-apple, because it is too sweet for his taste! Renan is not a weak writer on the whole, although he evinces weakness now and then. He is, apart from his fine descriptive powers, very learned and quite *up* to all the points on which he touches; and these are elements of strength. He has the solid attainments of Davidson, and something of Colenso's acute analysis added to his own genius and fascination of style.

W. on Renan has disappointed me. He has not the learning to grapple adequately with him. For instance, he seems altogether unaware of the fact, that the Second Epistle of Peter is regarded by many of the ablest of critics as spurious. His attempt to distinguish between Christ's speeches in the Synoptists and in John signally breaks down. He accounts for it on the principle that the former were delivered to the multitude, and the latter to the disciples. But some of the speeches in John are addressed to the multitude, and yet have the same style with those addressed to the initiated. And the difference in style, in theological purpose, and other respects between the parables, etc., in the Synoptists and the speeches in John is as great as the difference between the style of Herodotus and Plato. And the Christ in the two differs as much as the Cyrus of Herodotus and the Cyrus of the Cyropaedia. W. strongly reprobates Renan's version of Christ's view of the future world; but it is certainly that which popular belief has always sanctioned, and can be plausibly supported by Christ's own words. Some fine bursts however in W.'s lecture; and he has evidently insight into, and passionate attachment for Christ. But neither he nor Renan has cast one ray of new light upon the confounding clouds of mystery which overhang His life. His notion about Christ being

an "electric person" is not new, and does not seem very true-like. To supplant moral force by superior magnetism of body is not a fair exchange, or a real rendering of the facts. W. truly and nobly illustrates the immense power that Christ's life, death, and teaching have exerted upon society; but the difficulty is that the vast majority of men hitherto have received no benefit from Him; that His mission seems a comparative failure; and that, coming to seek and save the lost, so many are not saved. And although W. gets rid of this by holding universal Salvation, yet the majority of Christians, who hold the contrary, cannot of course take advantage of this.

Saw in a reply by Pressensé to Renan some remarks on Miracles which do not appear correct. He attempts to distinguish between the evidences of a magical feat and of a moral miracle. A magical feat must be tried like a chemical experiment; but this, he says, in a moral miracle is inadmissible. I don't see the force of this. I imagine that every miracle, in the first instance, subjects itself to the same conditions of inquiry as a feat of magic, and must be tried by the same standard. The consideration of purpose should come later. Whether it is the emptying of the contents of a wizard's bottle, or the apparent raising of a dead man like Lazarus,

the question instantly arises—Can or cannot some natural cause account for this abnormal phenomenon? If a natural cause suggests itself instantly, good and well; if not immediately, still you are unsatisfied—feeling that some natural cause may yet be found; and it is not till afterwards, when still no explanation is sufficient, that you begin to descry a moral element in the transaction, and to find the solution *there*. Pressensé's definition of a Miracle is extremely arbitrary. He calls it a sovereign intervention of Divine love. In this case a thousand wonders in Scripture cannot be called Miracles at all, being expressions of Divine hatred, and some of them having apparently no moral purpose whatever. He speaks as if Renan denied the possibility of Miracles,—but this he expressly disclaims; he asserts only that none of the Scripture miracles, subjected to a proper process of scientific investigation, were ever completely proved.

Pressensé speaks as if the question of the Divine liberty were involved in the question of miracles. But no one, at least no Theist, denies absolutely God's liberty to alter His laws. The question is;—Is it likely, that having fixed most wise and complicated laws stretching in complicated lines through the universe, He should frequently change them—especially as He might, from His infinite resources,

have arranged them so as to suit any and every purpose without any change? Besides, obedience to law is the creature's liberty, and why not the Creator's too? God's laws are just modes of conduct; lines of procedure He has deliberately and freely chosen; and to leave them, at least to leave them often, is rather caprice than liberty. Yet if ever there was a *nodus vindice dignus*, it was in the coming of Christ.

C. has been answering Renan. Absurd! you might as well answer "Robinson Crusoe," a romance founded on fact, and containing a peculiar view of the author. Many don't care for the theory. By answering it before a popular audience, you lay stress on, and direct attention to the theory, and make people imagine that there is something in it.¹

NOTES ON COLENSO'S "PENTATEUCH."

Soon after the Bishop's first part appeared I met a young clergyman of views more enlarged than his party. T., while speaking about the Pentateuch, insisted on premising Miracle as a necessary postulate, just as Neander in his "Life of Christ"

¹ The late Thomas Erskine of Linlathen said that Renan wrote in beautiful French, and regretted that there was no Pascal to reply to him in French equally beautiful. But it is difficult to know on what side Pascal would be!

premises His Divinity as a necessary postulate for considering His history. But if you admit an unlimited resource in miracle as accounting for every difficulty that may occur in considering a book, you render its consideration altogether superfluous. In vain you tell such thinkers that by multiplying miracle you lessen its power and its probability, its power as an argument and its probability as a fact, and do all you can to class the Bible with "The Arabian Nights;" to push Christianity out of all alliance with the philosophies and the sciences, and in among the superstitions; and, instead of enriching our religion, really to render it bankrupt, since an enormous number of miracles acts exactly as did the *assignats* in France, or the present *greenbacks* in America—in depreciating their own value. To object to *occasional* miraculous interference for special emergencies, or to show the Divine power to be independent of, or superior to, His own appointed laws, many think unphilosophical. But to suppose an almost incessant stream of miracle running as an under and opposing current to the ordinary tide of general law, and especially to resort to this supposition whenever a new difficulty in the Bible is started, is very absurd and unfair. Besides, the postulate of miracle not only permits if it does not necessitate the undue multiplication of such wondrous phenomena, but takes for granted the

whole question as to the nature of a miracle, whether it be the infraction of a law by a superior will, or the outshining of a higher Law. Obviously if the latter of these suppositions be true, miracle must be restrained *by* law, while seemingly opposed *to* law—in the other case alone can its operation be absolutely boundless and incalculable.

But T. maintained that there might be many miracles which did occur, and without which we cannot explain various passages in the Jewish history, and yet which are never mentioned in Scripture. On this strange principle he tried to explain the Midianitic war, in which 12,000 are recorded to have slain 118,000 in battle, besides pillaging their property, demolishing their castles, and destroying their towns; to have butchered afterwards in cold blood 118,000 females and 20,000 children; and in fine to have carried off 100,000 captives, and driven before them 808,000 head of cattle, and all without the loss of a single man! Miracle, cries T., will account for this. But why is there in the record not a word of miracle in the matter? Surely since the *nodus* seemed worthy of the *vindex*, the *vindex* might have been particularised, especially as the massacre of women and children is mentioned, and is certainly a fact so startling as to require all the authority to sanction it which can be found. On this principle, though

it is not mentioned, there might have been a shower of corn and grass from Heaven to feed the cattle in the wilderness! There is really no arguing with people who are for ever drawing on this reserved fund of miraculous interposition for the purpose of proving anything! T. spoke as if every one of these 12,000 were turned into a supernatural hero—an angel of the Lord, in order to expedite this great act of destruction. But why in their dubious contest with Amalek, and in their capture of Ai afterwards, was no such miraculous strength vouchsafed? But perhaps it *was*; but the fact is there too passed by in silence!

I find in all the replies to Colenso I have seen, counterbalancing his own frequent presumption, and leaping to conclusions, an immense number of mere assumptions and suppositions. The Bible speaks of the Israelites taking manna into their tents, but in order to escape from the difficulty of finding tents necessary for such a vast multitude, and whence they could have come, some of these controversialists take for granted that these tents were not all tents, but were many of them bare poles, or even wagons. Colenso allows a tent for every ten persons, but Micaiah Hill writes as if he had asserted that each one of the vast multitude occupied a special tent. Still more helplessly the *British Quarterly* reviewer, in order to explain the enormous increase of the

Israelites, after several similar evasions, actually adduces polygamy; and then after all is obliged to assume a miraculous multiplication. Why did he not assume this *imprimis*, and save himself his lame preliminaries? And where is the evidence that such a Briarean prolificness existed in Egypt? I really feel ashamed when I reflect on the pitiful panic, the furious feebleness of spirit, and the evasion of argument by which the book of the Bishop has been received, although it only confirms my previous impressions as to the want of the love of truth, etc., which is gaining ground in the Church, and co-existing with a vast apparent increase of devotion and zeal. At the same time Colenso has in some measure himself to blame. His first part is crude; and he might have anticipated a host of crude and raving replies.

Colenso: *Part Second*.—It is not so startling and piquant as the former, but shows a wider learning, greater originality of research, and the utmost determination to accomplish the full mission of ploughing down our notions of the Pentateuch. It has made me somewhat sad. The determination and perseverance of the onset are extraordinary; the ingenuity great, and here and there are touches of eloquence I did not observe in his first production. But I miss the patriotic feeling with which a

Christian might be replete, while parting for ever with those grand old antediluvian and patriarchal stories as truthful realities. Not one sigh escapes him as he lifts the knife of the sacrifice! That he is any more than in the former part entirely successful, I do not suppose. But I have an unavoidable feeling, that we must concede something or lose all. Verbal inspiration; the unity of the Pentateuch; the story of the Ark, etc., must go, or at least cannot be so firmly and literally held. I recall the story of the Russian sledge pursued by the wolves. We must surrender, I suspect, horses and menials too, if we would save the master-thought and genius of our faith. Colenso is hardly the self-sacrificing servant in that fine story; he seems rather to hound on the pack in the pursuit. Yet of his earnestness there can be no doubt, and his vindication of the great Protestant principle of free thought and private judgment is noble. Still, on the whole, I regret the publication of his book at present. It has come too soon, and its diffusion through the country will find the country not prepared for it. It will drive many to downright unbelief, shake others, and make some Christians very miserable. Yet good will come out of it in the long-run. It will wean us from the letter which killeth, and lead us to depend more on the spirit that giveth life. It will stem that

tendency, so visible of late, to a puling, whining, canting, and unreasoning Evangelicalism, which has been promoted in their different spheres by such men as Shaftesbury and Spurgeon. No wonder, though these men defend the Midianitic war when we remember how they clamorously approved of our Indian policy in 1857, and think of their loud outcries against the natives; the suppression of facts; the blowing from the guns, and the other barbarous and revengeful acts of that unhappy contest. And so far as Colenso has shaken the Judaical element which these persons are disposed to put on a level with the Christian, he has done good service. But he speaks ominously in one place of his researches ultimately tending to modify his views of Christianity; and there I tremble for him, and fear he may darken into one shape of the Antichrist. I pray the God of Truth and Christ to direct and guard him, and to turn the whole current he has stirred into a proper channel. Our religion has much need to become more thoughtful, liberal, charitable and inquiring than it is; but should its main pillars fall, the consequences may for long be disastrous. God send more of His heavenly light into this poor bewildered world!

What a contemptible document of weakness leaning on cant is that of the forty Bishops requesting Colenso to resign! Unable to kick

him down-stairs, they touch him with their collective great toes and say, "Won't you take the hint and walk off? It is a great shame if you don't; but please yourself!" And then comes Hampden, once thought a heretic or Socinian himself, wishing he had signed the document, and that it had been made a great deal stronger. And then of course follows Colenso, and respectfully declines to obey their gentle spiring, writing the note, I suppose, above a sheet of the "Third Part of the Pentateuch Examined." Poor English Church! thou art not my mother, and yet I love thee sufficiently well to feel considerable pity for thy present state!

What a shallow thing our dogmatic religion has become when it thirsts for and eagerly accepts some of its present defenders! Oh shades of Bentley, and Horsley, and Warburton, and Watson, and Locke, giants all in your respective times, what is your feeling as you see the Natal Bishop flaunting his flag before the citadel, and as you listen to the feeble and shotless reply of the guns to the insolent bravo! And yet the exultation of many Dissenters over the English Church in this matter is not comely, and is hardly honest. The more intelligent of their number see the difficulties as well as the broadest of the Broad Church, but they don't speak out so fully and plainly as they

ought. *Every Church that does not permit a full margin for inquiry, fearless of consequences, is doomed. It may remain a Church, but it will be left high and dry, crowded with ignorant members, and half-hearted officials, deserted of the good and the true; and by those who, true themselves, love and pant after and can be satisfied with nothing but truth.*

Part Third.—It is, as a book, much more readable and interesting than the Second. Its spirit, considering the treatment he has met, is exceedingly Christian; and certainly his preface makes the Bishops, with the exception of Tait, cut a shabby figure, both as to their learning and their charity. In some points he still leaps to conclusions, and I am by no means satisfied with his account of the "Finding of the Book of the Law," and his inferences therefrom. But I am almost convinced that Deuteronomy is post-Mosaic, and a very late production. I gather this not so much from its contradictions to the other books; its anachronisms; and the different words and phrases it employs, as from its general tone and style. At the close it seems evidently a prophetic rapture, coming, if not from Isaiah or Jeremiah, yet from one of the age of the later of these, and endued with the same glowing and imaginative spirit. It is entirely different from

the style of Moses, whether as a historian or a poet, if the 90th Psalm be his composition. The "Blessing" is evidently an imitation, with variations suited to a different age, of that of the dying Jacob, as Ezekiel's account of Pharaoh in the 32d chapter is imitated from Isaiah, chapter 14th.

I see Professor M'Caul has been hunting Colenso's hare with no great credit to himself. I have read Colenso's letter again, and think that he has been misunderstood. He takes the case of the hare chewing the cud as one out of many, as one small algebraic symbol of a large equation, and asks;—Can a command which professes to come from Jehovah's own lips, and which gives to a mere popular notion about the hare's chewing the cud, the authority of a fact, by making it the ground of a ceremonial enactment, be authentic? It is vain to say that God thus only conformed to the opinions of the Jews. Why did He so? Was not this very like laying down false foundations for true premises? M'Caul, after Michaelis and Linnæus, speaks of what he calls "spurious rumination;" but is not the same word used in the previous verse to describe the real rumination of the camel and the coney? The case seems to stand thus: either the word translated chewing the cud means a real or a spurious rumination. If the former, then the assertion is, according to Owen, false; if the latter, still the word is so

used as to leave a false impression on the general reader, as it must have done also on the Jew to whom it was originally addressed. Colenso, it must be noticed, is dealing solely with those who maintain verbal and universal inspiration. His objection does no harm to those who deny this. M'Caul brings in Cowper to prove that the hare chews the cud, as if Cowper, like many others, had not been deceived by the appearance of doing so which it unquestionably presents ; and while quoting Owen as asserting that the hare has not a ruminating stomach, he conveniently leaves out the first part of his statement in which he positively says, "The hare *does not* chew the cud." Small, complicated, absurd controversy on the whole ; and proving how much "spurious rumination" has, and particularly on the part of some of the orthodox, supplanted real, candid, and manly thought.

NOTES ON SIR CHARLES LYELL'S "ANTIQUITY
OF MAN."

What an awful revelation it gives of God's doings in the Past, and what an emphasis it adds to the words, "*The days of the years of the right hand of the Most High*"! And Man then has existed from

a space approaching our conception of Eternity. This may alter our notions about the Mosaic Cosmogony, but need not stagger our faith. Indeed, once grant the immense age of the Heavens and the Earth, and you are relieved to find that human beings, even in their rudest and most primitive forms far superior to brutes, have existed so long. And yet if these races were sinners, as we are, what a dismal thought is that immeasurable cycle of Evil and consequent Misery, which must have run its course before History begins to register the career and the crimes of Man! One is sometimes driven in sheer blind and furious perplexity, like that of the Cyclops in his cave, to adopt some form or other of the Manichæan theory, such as that which attributes to an Earthly and Inferior, if not Infernal Spirit, the creation of the world and of man, while Christianity, and all that is good and true, come from the Supreme God; and perhaps this may be found after all to be nearly the truth, although it is exposed to strong objections, and seems as yet incapable of decisive proof.¹ Yet if there be, as some maintain, no cranial difference between the brute and the man, sufficient to account for man's superiority, which lies chiefly in his soul, why should not

¹ J. S. Mill further favoured this view as a hypothesis, and wondered it had not been revived in our time. Perthes, Stöffens, and other Germans inclined to it. See also Bayle's Dictionary, Articles on Manichæism and Paulicians.

this have been the infusion from a higher and better Power than that which made man's mere materialism and lower life, and that degree of intellect which he shares, although possessing it in a larger measure, with the animal? Such a view would enable us to face, without much fear, the doctrine of the Evolution of Species, since what though an ape were our ancestor as to the body, if God, the Supreme Deity and Father of Spirits, were our ancestor as to the soul? Such a dualistic doctrine would cast a gleam of light upon the two-fold nature of man—the contradictions and struggles which led to the Fall, the victory of the inferior over the superior nature—on the process of the recovery, gradual, resisted, but ongoing ever; and perhaps also on the Incarnation, Christ being created by the Holy Ghost, one entire being without any vestige of the earthly Adam, except his necessary limitations as a finite creature. But ah! it is only a gleam. We are all in "the Cave" still; and our groanings and groping do not prevail to open the door, or even one chink in the wall.

Have read a great part of Lyell's book. Have been struck by the following things: *First*, by its extreme candour and freedom from bias. He is the very Nestor of geology in calmness as in age. *Second*, by the general truthfulness of the writing, although mingled doubtless with many errors in detail. I

heard an objection stated—by one, however, who had not read the book himself,—that he drew too strong and large conclusions from narrow premises. This, however, is only a variety of the Cuvier process of generalisation. He sees the large in the little. In observing certain commonplace arguers, I have sometimes been struck by this phenomenon. They state their facts with great emphasis, their conclusions with less. Their dogmatism dies ere the *finis*. Lyell is modest alike in the premises and in the inferences, although he sometimes *italicises* as it were in a conclusion something that scarcely requires it,—being very evident without any emphasis false or true. I find, indeed, nothing in his volume to give me much new spiritual faith or hope. Nothing in reference to man can be rated as very valuable which does not cast some light on his origin, duty, and destiny. Now on the latter two, Lyell seeks to shed no light, and even as to the first he leaves the matter extremely obscure and uncertain. I do not tremble now, as I used to do, at the theory of the immense age of man, or at his descent from the ape, since he must at some time have come from God; and since assuredly his higher nature is far superior to the animal, and approaches the divine. But all theories, including the Mosaic account, leave the origin of the *whole* man, including the evil as well as the good within him, a profound mystery.

Even Christianity chiefly teaches us our duty. Of our origin and our destiny what it says is carefully wrapt up in figures, allegories, and predictions.

NOTES ON BUTLER'S "ANALOGY."

As to Butler's Analogy, its real meaning is, I sometimes think,—“two blacks *should* make a white.” Because there are difficulties in Nature we should expect them in Revelation. Now we might rather hope that Revelation should clear up the old difficulties of Nature, instead of, in fact, creating new shadows. Ought it not rather to be said, that the continued existence of these difficulties in Revelation proves that it is a natural product, just as if you saw wens and spots on the body of a child, and knew that such are found in the parent, it were a strong corroboration of the fact of paternity? It may be said that Christianity offers a way of escape from the evils of Nature; but it might be urged that the evidence for the validity of that way would have been stronger, had there been any explanation given of the tremendous moral problems of the Universe. How feeble Butler's reply to the objection against the Gospel, that its light is limited! He says Nature's light is limited too. But the Gospel came professedly as a broader

revelation of the will and love of God. Nature at best only professes to hint, but the Gospel professes to speak out, and to speak out to all, "Go ye and disciple all nations." And yet the fearful fact remains, that after two thousand years all nations are not disciplined, and Christendom, as a whole, is not Christian.

NOTES ON NEWMAN'S "APOLOGIA."

It is, on the whole, a melancholy affair. As an argument for Catholicism, it is naught. As a history of his own experiences, it is curious rather than satisfactory; containing an account of a tortuous, interrupted, wriggling, reptile-like retreat to Rome; full of maudlin trash about the Virgin Mary, the Real Presence, etc.; and if it defends his character for belated honesty, it damages it a good deal for intellect. He has been a sceptic, but scarcely of the grandest type, and has a diseased craving for supernaturalism; dogmas; authority, and so forth.¹

¹ Have heard of a case completely confirmatory of these remarks. A gentleman publishing a volume of hymns sent them to Newman, and wrote him, speaking highly of *his* hymns, but deploring his Romish creed. Newman answered, reciprocating the sorrow, but saying that he was glad that he had a dogma, though not the right one! Query, Whether is worse, —no creed at all, or a false dogma, i.e. a lie? I tried the latter, Newman the former. "Be it a damnable falsehood—Thuggism, Mormonism—if it be but a dogma!"

I don't think his power, so far as this book manifests it, rises above all casuistry; he has the brain of a Belial, and the tongue too. Little allusion to, or acknowledgment of, the great primal mysteries and awful problems of existence. These are covered from his eyes, as Carlyle once said about O'Connell going to Rome, "to hide from him the great fact of Death under the Pope's petticoats." "Come, my lad, and drink some beer," cried Johnson's sage. So says the pervert:—Get merry at the table of the Real Presence; with superstitious enthusiasm fall in love with the Madonna, and all shall be well, and sin and death and human woe, and an eternal hell shall seem delightful varieties—trifling and picturesque inequalities in the landscape of the universe. Great is Delusion, *et prævalebit*.

Still reading at "Vita sua." Am satisfied that were his statements examined with microscopic eye, they would be found full of holes and *hiati*. It does not look like the plain downright tale of an honest man, although it is extremely difficult to lay one's finger decisively on the weak and rotten parts. What trash he talks about the unreality of matter accounting for the "Real Presence;" a doctrine which contradicts all conceivabilities, whether phenomenal or real. It were quite as easy to prove the omnipresence of the Devil as this man-made mystery. Is not only all common sense to be out-

raged, but all philosophy to be mystified, in order to account for a metaphor employed four times in the New Testament? On Newman's grounds, Swift's Lord Peter was a fair reasoner,—the brown crust *was* lamb, veal, mutton, and beef. Newman leaves nothing solid but the Eucharist, nothing real except the Real Presence. I wish he had a better opponent than Kingsley. A man compounded of Arnold and Henry Rogers, with the sense and learning of Arnold, the sharpness and wit of Rogers, would make awful havoc of "*Vita sua*" and its astute author.

Newman speaks of this world as a roll filled with mourning, lamentation, and woe. Now in reference to this assertion I may say that there is a great deal of misery and a great deal of happiness in the world; and that every one judges of the preponderance of the one over the other by his temperament, circumstances, and experience; but that to strike the balance fairly is competent to God only; because He alone can take a full and absolutely exhaustive view of both, of all sides of the matter. It is probable, from God's character, that there has been even already more happiness than misery in this imperfect and evil world; it is certain that much of man's misery springs from man's own fault; and likely that as man advances, his happiness will increase with his improvement in

knowledge and civilisation. But it is also undoubted that the days of darkness are many; and that the mystery connected with their existence, and their number, and the fact that they do not always spring from sin, is very great. But what remedy does Newman propose? Just the old ostrich one of hiding our heads from all difficulties under the umbrageous canopy of an Infallible Church!

MISS COBBE'S "BROKEN LIGHTS."

Miss Cobbe's "Broken Lights" is an admirable, eloquent, and most womanly book. The last chapter is one of the best things I have read for long. Her rebuke of Carlyle and Emerson for the inhumanity of their treatment of criminals and block-heads, coming from her liberal lips, is overwhelming, and her views of prayer and penitence are, on her grounds, exceedingly beautiful. Verily she is not far from the kingdom of Heaven. Far from it! she is in its deepest bosom! further in than nine-tenths of our stricter and sterner authors; only, I fear, a long time must elapse ere that lofty religion of which she speaks can generally obtain. Men are still, as a whole, children—not in Christ's sense however—if not imbeciles, and must be frightened by strange noises, and soothed by sweet delirious

anodynes. I joyfully accept this lady's plea for God, and immortality, and the supremacy of conscience. She expects immortality for the wise and highly educated; she claims it for the abjects and ignorant of the race who have had few opportunities and been brought up in an atmosphere which has almost compelled them to be evil. Her exposition of an eternal hell is very powerful; only I think that her idea of its being inseparably connected with the doctrine of atonement is hardly correct. Grant that atonement is universal, and it almost leads to universal salvation, or at least to some important modification of doom. Her account of Christ and His work is excellent; but afterwards, I think, she pushes Him too far back in the great scheme of mercy, provoked to this, no doubt, by a little exaggeration on the other side. I sometimes entertain the conception of all minds being condensed into one gigantic spirit. Might not this supposition have been realised in Christ? Was He not the sum-total of humanity, united by His elevation to divinity? Miss Cobbe, with some others, conceives that there is but one great Force in the universe; and that that bears to the will of God the same relation that the small vital force we have does to our will. This is the material force. But may not Christ be the moral force of the universe acted on by God as the material force is? I figure the

"Strong Son of God" as one standing in Heaven before the "twenty thousand veils," concealing God from angels, and ever and anon looking in and confronting that insufferable blaze, while presenting our prayers, or opening the way for the descent of blessings on our heads, as an eagle gazes, and alone can gaze, on the mid-day sun! This book has done me good,—awakened in my heart a religious glow such as I have not felt for many a day.

H. L. MANSEL AND THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL
PUNISHMENT.

Mansel's view of God is perhaps philosophically correct, but practically it is untrue. We cannot *think* God, but we can *feel* him; and this feeling is invaluable,—is all we can at present get; and in a strengthened, purified form is probably all we can ever reach even in a future life. He makes all religion a mere matter of testimony. Jesus Christ is proved by miracles and prophecy to be divine; but query—Of what consequence this, so long as you don't tell us what the divine is, and admit that nature gives us no conception and no measure for divinity? This is reaching the conclusion Samuel Brown used to say many good Christians had come to, that "the Man of Galilee was God, and there

was no other." Mansel does not seem aware of the external evidences. Mansel thinks he defends eternal punishment by holding that the lost are to go on sinning as well as suffering for ever. Of this he has no evidence from Scripture. The only evidence—in the parable of Dives and Lazarus—goes rather the other way, as showing a desire in Dives for the conversion of his brethren. To suppose that he did not want them in hell lest they should add to his misery there, is a mere unfounded inference. But apart from this, what a double darkness is thus cast upon the subject! Sin, according to this theory, is not merely not repressed at all, but goes on increasing along with suffering for evermore. What a dismal prospect!

Some, in support of eternal punishment, quote the passage about Judas, "It had been good for that man that he had not been born;" not seeing that this announces something peculiar in Judas's case. It had been good for all the damned, if damned for ever, that they had never been born; and hence the fact of eternal damnation implies no peculiar curse upon Judas, unless it implied that he alone was to inherit that doom. In short, it is just a very strong proverbial expression of great wickedness and great misery, and has probably no reference to the future world at all.

I see in the *Weekly Review* a paper, the first of

a series, on eternal punishment. They had better let it alone. Even though this writer should prove it to be a doctrine of Scripture, he will only supply to the doubter a new and very strong argument against that authority. The Bible is proved partly by internal evidence; but many will not scruple to say that the teaching of such a horrible and hopeless dogma would be a powerful internal evidence against the Scriptures. It is vain to appeal to the beliefs of the heathen; the Gospel professes to bring new light and love from God's own heart and Heaven; and if the light in it be only the old heathen darkness, how great is that darkness! Eternal punishment now appears to many the beggarliest, and most detestable of all the Pagan elements which have been retained in Christianity, and the prolific source of every species of open impiety, and false and pretended devotion. Indeed it is essential Atheism, inasmuch as it denies the moral and Fatherly character of God; and if God be not a Father, his existence is a thing rather to be deprecated than desired.

See notice of a document signed by 1100 of the English clergy supporting verbal inspiration and eternal punishment; how humbling! What broadcast atheism such a document is sure to sow! What suicidal folly to pitch an army's tents on a quicksand; to select the weakest points in the

whole system for ramparts! The worst is that while probably the majority of these 1100 are, as Chalmers used to phrase it, "conies, a feeble folk," many of them, it is to be feared, must be inconsistent with their own convictions. The *Spectator* has some good remarks on the subject. Three hundred out of the 1100 waited upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, who dismissed them with his benediction; which the *Spectator* compares to the walling up of living souls by the judges of the Inquisition, with the benignant irony *Vade in Pacem!* Had the devil spent ten hundred of his torrid years in hatching a scheme for best dishonouring Christianity and retarding God's work in the world, he might have congratulated himself on having hit at length on *this*. It makes one inclined to get sick of the very name of religion. The mere attempt to decide difficult questions, and to concuss opponents by dint of numbers deserves condemnation. But Tait's name is not on the list; that is well, and had Arnold been living, his would not have been on it either, and that would have been far better! Some one holds eternal punishment to be a necessary result of the moral delinquency of man; and if the promises of a future life, and the continuance in it of the present system be granted, he is possibly right. But *ipso facto*, the future life must be very different from this, and granting God's wisdom,

power, and love, the difference it is likely will be on the side of improvement. That God *can* make His creatures better is admitted on all hands ; that He is willing to do so is conceded by many even of the orthodox. The question is—Why should not this will and power produce new combinations of circumstances insuring a more favourable result than now ? If the future life lead necessarily to the deepening sin and misery of man, and to increasing darkness of mystery around God, men will not only cease to sigh for immortality, but begin to sift its evidences with a terrible desire to find it false, and certainly, to say the least of it, these are not so overpowering as to be independent of the weight of that thirst for immortality of which poets speak, and which implies a hope and instinctive sense that it is better than the present life.

I said before that the Papists, for the sake of four texts, outrage all common sense and philosophy ; and so the ultra-Evangelicals, for the sake of some dozen adjectives—everlasting, eternal, etc.—trample on all the feelings of the human heart, expose God to fearful charges, and, worst of all, are driven to practise sophistications of an elaborate kind ; and thus weave a web by which honesty is strangled, and fair reasoning rendered impossible. There is nothing for it but to blow such sophistries away with snorting nostrils as you do with spiders' webs.

Luther did so with the equivocations of the Papists, and so should we.

Saw part of the late Archbishop of Canterbury's letter to the Clergy at the present crisis. It is very poor and twaddling. He graciously allows the clergy to accept small alterations, new readings in the texts, etc., but on no account to doubt any large part of the Canon. He tells them that the eternal perdition of the wicked rests on the same foundation as the eternal happiness of the good, or the everlasting existence of God Himself; because the same word is applied to all. But the same word is applied to the hills and mountains; and we hear of Canaan as an everlasting possession to the Jews, which it has not been, and is never likely to be—of a certain precept in the law being an everlasting statute, and so forth. Of course the Archbishop's letter is a *brutum fulmen*, and does not affect the decision of the Privy Council at all. And I see several of the English clergy are taking advantage of their new privilege of speaking out on that mysterious theme. There must be more liberty of speech in all churches, else liberty of thought without corresponding liberty of utterance will become a deadly and demoralising curse. Truth confined in an intellect, and warm true feeling in a heart, fester each into a poison. How absurd to expect uniformity in the present day!

NOTES ON MISS HENNELL'S "EARLY CHRISTIAN."

Miss Hennell is perhaps a profounder thinker than Miss Cobbe, but has not her clearness, her humanity, her poetry. Miss Hennell seems to write as if she wished to set the public, even the intelligent public, at defiance. What an age after all that can produce such women, although Spurgeon thinks it going to the devil! His narrow and boastful evangel may do some good to amorous youths by turning their emotions into a new channel, but can bring forth no such fruit now as gifted and high-souled women. Yet alas! these are only still a very small minority in the age, although increasing. Miss Hennell seems to have a great truth in her, but oh! how hermetically sealed. Her view of Butler's "Analogy" is, I think, in substance true. He by proving the likeness of Revelation to Nature proved her a duplicate, and therefore perhaps a human imitation, or at least another outcome of Nature. A God of infinite resources was not likely, she thinks, to repeat himself. Miss Hennell finds both natural and revealed Religion in the same source, the gradual development of the human mind. The worst is—with her—she has something of importance and novelty to tell, but for her life she cannot! You see a large light gleaming within

the veil, but see it only in a faint and tantalising manner. Sometimes a sentence of dazzling clearness occurs, and you shout "Eureka!" but she straightway withdraws into a shroud of deeper darkness. And then she is so supremely satisfied that she has made herself clear. Some of her darkest deliverances are followed by a mark of admiration, like a bright edge to a thunder-cloud. It does not even make the darkness visible to you, though it proclaims *her* belief that it is divine.

Her views of a future life are not so decided as Miss Cobbe's. In reference to that subject my thoughts are always perplexed, and sometimes very gloomy. One scheme of it which commends itself to me at times is that of God selecting the good and true out of the race; not arbitrarily, but on account of their use of His light, and glorifying them with Himself, leaving the rest to some inferior destiny to become permanently the pariahs of the universe—Edward Irving seems in one part of his "Orations" to incline to this notion;—or else giving them another chance of salvation; or else blotting them out of the book of existence. Some such scheme seems almost essential to our conception of a wise, good and powerful God, and our refuge against either Pantheism, or the common monstrous dogma of God damning the vast majority (hitherto) of His creatures for ever and ever. Foster's letters

to Edward White and Harris are unanswerable on this and cognate themes. Were Pantheism after all true, then farewell all hopes of meeting departed friends, renewing intellectual and moral joys, and being "ever with the Lord!" Yet although intellectual advance seems tending toward Pantheism, and it is certainly encumbered with fewer difficulties than our common Evangelical creed, it is far less beautiful and consoling than the above esoteric idea—an idea common too among many thinkers who hate Calvinism, and for Pantheism are not prepared. But all these things are dim, and shall continue so till each spirit like Venus has accomplished a separate transit in visible darkness over the face of God. It is suggestive that Venus and Mercury change from stars to dark dots in their transit across the sun, but, after the passage, come out brighter than before. Free from all fleshly and other environments, how glorious should be the naked new-born soul, unless it were dwindled and darkened by the immediate presence of God, and even then it is not to be "blasted by His brow."

I don't see that these new views are as yet making better men; just because they are new, crude, half-formed, and with the public unpopular; and those who hold them are exposed to suspicion, which too often leads to the fulfilment of its prophecy. But I am certain that sooner or later

Wisdom will be justified of her children; and the larger Religion will make the race humbler, more charitable, better, and higher.

NOTES ON DR. SAMUEL DAVIDSON'S "INTRODUCTION
TO THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS."

Have been reading pretty carefully Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament." It has on the whole pained and bewildered rather than satisfied me. Neither the arguments he refutes, nor his replies, seem very powerful, and their strongest compound effect is uncertainty. I feel that neither the German school nor he has settled the question as to the origin and authorship of the four Gospels. I am doubtful if even the elements of a fair and final settlement now exist. If so, no masterly hand has as yet elicited from them any convincing and decisive shape of the truth. How unwilling I feel to give up any of that "sweet story of old," God knows. How reluctant especially to resign my faith in the apostolic authorship of that beautiful and sublime Gospel of John! And yet there are difficulties of a very perplexing kind, some of which Davidson has not thoroughly explained in his very able and elaborate volumes. The Gospels appear to have been compilations col-

lected from various sources ; composed at different times and by uncertain authors, who seem each to have had his own several purpose in view ; the information of all of them is limited ; the date of each doubtful ; the authorship of each doubtful ; the statements frequently *seeming* to contradict each other, and with no regular plan or chronological order running through any of them. If verbal inspiration be contended for, how strange all this ! If general accuracy, how can even this be proved out of so many conflicting details ? If these men had supernatural gifts, why were not chronological order and accuracy, so essential to an historian, divinely conferred upon them ? After all, amidst the conflicting lights and shadows of the history and the many uncertainties in details, there can be little doubt of the impression made upon the religious mind of Judea by the nature of Christ, which seemed to it altogether unique and divine ; and of the signal blessings his religion has conferred upon the world. Why should we not be contented with such generalities ? Why insist upon every doctrine, statement and word, in such artless compilations as the Gospels, being equally inspired, and thereby, through our own one-sided folly, provoke others to deny everything and concede nothing ?

Am reading Davidson on the Old Testament.

His free handling of it won't please the Scotch. They always seek to foreclose criticism by dogmatism and domineering conclusions. They forget that Scripture criticism is a science, responsible only to its own laws, and that when there are spots in the Sun, they must be registered as faithfully as its rays. I do not envy the intellect or the honesty of the man who can now hold to the verbal inspiration, or absolute historical accuracy of Scripture. Yet Davidson is sometimes offensively dogmatic, knocking down a man before he bids him stand, and often giving no reason except his *ipse dixit*. But he has sometimes to do with a poor and provoking school of—not critics but—apologists.

There is something extremely puzzling in the genesis of the Gospels. One thing is very remarkable: John states the resurrection of Lazarus to have been the cause of Christ's death. And yet the Synoptists never allude to it. Matthew and Mark, writing perhaps at a distance from the spot, might not know the fact; but Luke had made extensive inquiries about the whole subject, and yet is quite silent about this most remarkable event. Lazarus is not found in the train of Christ afterwards; or among the disciples after the Resurrection. Jacobsen used to think that he was put to death by the Jews; but although there is a

hint as to their intention, there is no record of its having been effected. The grand difficulty as aforesaid with me is the difference in spirit, sentiment, and style between Christ's words in the Synoptists and his words in John ; nearly as great as between the style of John Newton and Plato.

Have just thought of a passage in Second Peter which confutes the theory of a partial deluge. "The world that then was"—called the Earth in a previous verse,—“being overflowed with water, perished ; but the heavens and earth which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire.” If the deluge was partial, so must be the general conflagration. And Peter says expressly that it was the Earth “standing in the water and out of the water,” which was opposed to the Heavens which perished. The theory of a partial deluge is a mere subterfuge. This is, of course, only for those who admit the authenticity of Peter's Second Epistle.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES AND SKETCHES.

RELIGIOUS POETRY.

RELIGIOUS poetry has won the enemies as well as cheered the friends of Christ. It has gone about the City of Destruction like a circling band of music; and, attracted by its wailing pathos, or its victorious pæans, or its bursts of impassioned gratitude and adoration, many have listened and looked over the walls for the sake of the lovely sound, who at last have learned to perceive the meaning conveyed, and to obey the call given,—to leave the selfish City. It has hid bitter though salutary medicine in the sweetest honey. It has resembled the bright leaves of the Tree of Life, attracting many by their beauty first to look, then to love, then to seize and eat, and then to live for ever. Religious poetry proclaims the nuptials of heavenly truth and earthly beauty. It decks with all the fresh roses and glories of earth the sublime stranger who has come from above. It reflects, as in ten thousand mirrors,—dewdrops, lakes, rivers and oceans,—the rays which have descended directly

from God's Throne. And in fine, it forms a pledge, symbol, and foretaste of that blessed world where there shall be no cold, dark, naked, or repulsive truth; but where every principle will be clad in beauty, and every idea inspired with glowing life; where every thought and feeling shall, as it springs up, become song and music, and where it shall be seen that the true, the beautiful, and the good are one, and that religion is poetry.

Poetry cannot heighten the Divine, but Poetry can raise us up toward a perception of it. Imagination representing Nature may be compared to a man drawing a child. Imagination seeking to represent God is a child trying to draw a man. There is a distinction between belief and quasi-belief—the one is not necessary, the other is, to a great poet.

Religion is the worship of the true as goodness going up to Heaven in incense. Poetry is the worship of the true as beauty going up to Heaven on the breath of flowers. "A poet's spirit is a far-off sigh of God." A true and great poem comes out softly, sweetly, and sure of welcome as a new star amidst her silent sisterhood; or, as the moon has just now in my sight come forth, like an expected and longed-for lady into her room of state, to contemplate the glories of this resplendent summer eve; displacing no other, interfering with no other,

but taking up at once its appointed and immortal place.

The giant angels are compelled by Milton to shrink their stature, ere they can enter the palace of Pandemonium. Christianity by a nobler magic, compels all, however gifted and powerful, to subside, as it were, into their cradles again, to resume once more the measure and the stature of little children. All religions teach their votaries to imitate; the Mahometans copy Mahomet, and so forth; Christianity inculcates incarnation, and tells men that they must not only be like Christ, but Christ must be in them.

The pencil has, speaking generally, wrought more frequently and more willingly, more patiently and more powerfully, in the service of Christianity than the poet's pen, and deserved more to bear the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." The multitudinous facts and characters of our religion continue to shine down, now in mornlike softness and now in sunlike splendour, now in melting pathos and now in holy horror, now radiant and mild as the first blush of dawn, and now running red, like veins of lightning across a stormy heaven, from the

immortal paintings of an Angelo, a Da Vinci, a Raphael, a Reynolds, a Haydn, a John Martin, and a David Scott.

SCOTT, WORDSWORTH, AND BYRON.

Scott is the best story-teller, save Homer, the world ever saw; Wordsworth the worst. But in musing and meditative power of genius, in his rendering of the deeper secrets and meanings of Nature, Wordsworth is, of our time, the poet. Scott's "Lady of the Lake" is a splendid story, with a good deal of poetry too. A page, however, of the "Excursion" has more poetry than all the "Lady of the Lake" put together, but then its story creeps like a tortoise. Shelley has a good deal of Wordsworth's insight into Nature, added to far greater lyrical fire, abandonment, and music. I sometimes think had Byron lived he would have been the greatest English poet save Shakespeare. He would have united much of Scott's narrative power, and much of Shelley's lyrical music, much of Wordsworth's meditative depth, and his own passion and clearness and wit and sarcasm and marvellous elasticity, into a great whole. Even religion might have come through wiser conduct and a longer life.

MOORE.

Lyrics and songs arise in the morning twilight, and generally in mountain lands. They remind you of the strains of those early birds which sing so sweetly when the day is young, and become dumb at high noon. The vast majority of songs and lyrics in every language are expressions of moods and moments of joy or sorrow, love or desire; and the lyric, of all kinds of poetry, may be said specially to swim and revolve in the present like a gold fish in its limited but lovely globe of glass.

Songs are just the natural utterances, the irrepressible language, the spontaneous cries of men of heart and genius newly awakened from the darkness of ignorance, wondering and rejoicing in the sweet and sudden light.

Moore has tickled, soothed, melted, lapped readers in luxurious sentimentalism; and like a man seduced by the charms of a woman whom his deeper nature despises, have they yielded to the fascination. His versification is too luxuriously sweet; it has not the psalm-like swell of our higher poets, nor the linnet-like gushes of others, it is at best a guitar played by a high-born cavalier to a shy beauty under an Italian eve.

We often see the clouds at evening assume striking resemblances to the mountains over which they rest, as if they would be substantial if they could. Such a similitude to poetry do Moore's productions bear. They are like it, they are near it, they seem to many something better and higher, but they are *not* poetry. We can conceive the ambitious member of a fairy family, such as the White Maid of Avenel, aspiring to be one of the human race, to throb with their passions, to assume their strong incarnation, and to share in their immortal destinies ; and the seeming success and ultimate failure of the impossible endeavour might furnish a lively type of Moore's impotent ambition—"I also would be a poet." A butterfly bard like Moore would not have attracted a tithe of the notice, if he had not appeared early in aristocratic bowers ; and unless, unlike other butterflies, he had worn a sting.

SOUTHEY.

Southey's life evolved like a piece of music ; it was secure in its results as a mathematical theorem, punctual in its motions as a planet ! His life was a lake—not a river ; like a lake, pure, still and solitary ; not like a river, chequered, bustling, and

communicative. It moved—but in its very motion there was rest. Perhaps the best idea of the literary life is that of a combination of the elements of purity and progress—a river-lake, moving through the grossnesses and miseries of the world, and yet reflecting the image of the Heavens in unsullied clearness from its bosom. There was a long sting in Southey's impulse, like a lance of lightning running through all his history.

His "Thalaba" hardly pleases me now. The want of rhyme is a grand drawback in so long a poem. Much of the witchwork is fantastic without being powerful. The story is not very interesting. But there are individual descriptions and incidents in it of great power, especially that in which the unknown female ferries him across the ocean paths after she had asked, "Wilt thou go on with me?" and he had answered, "I will go on with thee." This voyage, "divine and strange," evidently suggested that in the first canto of the "Revolt of Islam." The last canto of "Thalaba" is a failure. He sinks before he closes. The opening of "Kehama" I have always admired. Nothing can be finer than the description of Nealling on the funeral pyre.

Southey's is, on the whole, a laborious genius. He labours to succeed, and does succeed. He piles

up poetry ; it seldom or never comes on him—there are few rushing breathless felicities. Most of the poetry in “Thalaba” is taken bodily from Mahometan books, travels, etc. ; and he seldom adds any new glory of his own to what he appropriates—it does not lose in his hands, but neither does it gain. It is different with Shelley, Byron, and Coleridge. They borrow materials, but they kindle them by the fire of their own genius. Wordsworth borrows fuel no more than fire, except from Nature, and she never raises a hue and cry !

CRABBE.

Have been glancing at Crabbe's life and works for the first time for many years. His poetry stands in the relation to some others, which table-land does to mountains and plains ; it is at once high and low—low in materials, high in execution. What a matter of fact madness is that of Sir Eustace Grey ! Shelley would have plunged his maniac in craters, or seated him on a comet, or hurled him down a rift in rocks to hell ! Crabbe now fixes him in a fen, and now perches him on the ball of a steeple. Yet the effect, and particularly through the introduction of our old friends in Bunyan, “the ill-

favoured ones," is most powerful and appalling. He wrote it during a severe snowstorm !

The "Hall of Justice" has Shakspearian touches of passion, blended with Crabbe's own severe and literal accuracy of description. In his poem entitled the "World of Dreams" we find profuse but still more prosaic imagination. Take the following stanza :—

"I tremble from the loftiest tower,
Yet evil have I never found ;
Supported by some favourite power
I come in safety to the ground.
I rest upon the sea ; the sound
Of many waters in mine ear ;
Yet have no dread of being drowned ;
Yet see my way and cease to fear."

How poor to some of the lines in Coleridge's "Pains of Sleep" ! Or take this :—

"I know not how, but I am brought
Into a large and Gothic Hall ;
Seated with thee, I never sought
Kings, Caliphs, Kaisers, silent all ;
Pale as the dead, enrobed and tall,
Majestic, frozen, solemn, still,
They wake my fears, my wits appal,
And with both scorn and terror fill."

Compare this with the dream of Sardanapalus, one of the ghastliest but strongest pictures Byron ever drew ! Yet Crabbe in this poem has admirably

expressed the shifty cloud-like character of dreams, but not so well the vague horror, the unearthly scenery, the far glimpses into the past and the future and the other ideal elements which connect them with the Infinite. After all, in their prose, De Quincey and Jean Paul Richter far surpass all our dreaming Poets.

Glanced at "Balder;" I had not seen it for ten years. It is a monstrous production, full of power, but the power contorted as in the wildest pictures of David Scott; the anatomy of feeling is wonderful in its minuteness, but weak also from the same cause; the subjective diseasedly paramount, and the story painfully unpleasing and obscure—besides, the best passages, such as "Chamouni" (a very noble strain) are dragged in to glorify the poem instead of rising naturally from it, as though Shakespeare had inserted his "Venus and Adonis" in his "Hamlet"! It is, as a whole, a cramped effort at originality, a magnificent spasm, and how melancholy withal! Its author, as I have said elsewhere, was a man of high genius and very generous character.

BURNS'S "JOLLY BEGGARS."

Read some of Burns. His "Jolly Beggars" would be seductive and dangerous were it not for the coarseness, I had almost said, providentially present. He is naked and not ashamed; and yet such is our strange nature, so much does it hold with, or derive from the very lowest and grossest of the animal tribes, that there is something in that coarseness attractive to all men, and for many possessing a stronger charm than anything else in the world—nay, at times it is felt, if yielded to, that it yields the most desperately delightful of all enjoyments. "Lord, what is man?" In proportion to this unquestionable fact must be the crime of those who wantonly or wilfully drop the torch on such gunpowder as human passion. I think the amount of passion in all men of average health and strength is much about the same; but while many indulge it almost exclusively, others throw it out into art or science, or literature or religion, and thus get rid of its superfluity and save themselves. With women it is very different; they vary exceedingly according to temperament, circumstances, education, etc. "The love," says Coleridge, "of the man is to the woman, the love of the woman is to the love of the man." What a voluptuary Crashaw

would have been had he not taken to Catholicism ; George Herbert had he not become a rector and written the "Temple;" Coleridge if he had not gone to Philosophy and opium ; Sir Walter Scott if he had not become the most attentive of business men and the most diligent of fictionists ; and Chalmers if he had not transferred himself with all his flames to the Christian ministry in its strictest form ! Occupation is always favourable to restraint. If Byron had been a hardworking Grub Street writer, he could hardly have accumulated the materials of "Don Juan" and "Parisina." Mortification too, as I think I said somewhere before, and disappointment are unfavourable to passion unless they go too far, and in a fierce protest and reaction hurry the man to it through a kind of reckless despair.

LOCKHART.

Read last night Lockhart's "Noctes" of 1831, describing the debates on the Reform Bill. Although embittered a little with party feeling and Lockhart's constitutional acidity, they are masterly sketches—free, graphic, and manly. What a pity Lockhart was such a coarse and ill-conditioned fellow ! He had strong masculine power in him,

and power perhaps better fitted than Wilson's, had he so chosen, to produce permanent results. It is curious to notice which of the speakers and talkers are still extant, and which are gone. Burdett, Cobbett, and Henry Hunt have all long ago vanished. Macaulay was then thirty-one, and he scarcely reached sixty. Grey too and Durham are both gone; and so are Sheil, Hume, Wellington, and the giant O'Connell. Croker has a good while ago snarled his last. Derby was then about thirty-five; he is now nearly twice that age, and is still powerful and elastic. Lord John Russell too is extant in a good state of preservation. Lord Palmerston, then a "handsome dandy of fifty," is now a good-looking and springy veteran of eighty; and Brougham at eighty-five is still no ghost, but full of energy and plunged in work. Canning died at the age of fifty-seven; Brougham has survived him thirty-seven years, and is now twenty-eight years older than Canning at his death. The sketcher Lockhart too is himself ten years dead, and so is the noble, generous Christopher North. They were a race of giants, and are now all nearly gone; the middle-aged or young of this time are far inferior; only, of course, we do not know those men of the past so well as we do ourselves, and "distance lends enchantment," etc. Lockhart is rather unjust to O'Connell, especially to his appearance. He was

no doubt "robust," but he was more, he was a regal-looking man, the "Charlemagne" of Ireland—ay, every inch a king. And there was a certain kingly ease blended with dignity in his manner of speech, despite its occasional coarseness, which none but an Anax Andron could assume. No Bourbon or Guelph ever looked the monarch so well as did O'Connell on that September day on the Calton Hill.

DR. JOHNSON AND THE MEN OF HIS AGE.

Goldsmith and Boswell could not appreciate each other. This was owing to their relation to Johnson. Two satellites circling round and worshipping one sun can hardly do justice to each other's actual or relative magnitude; the earth and the moon, however different in size, and while both looking up to the same sun, look down on each other.

Boswell was to a great critic what a boy of fine, fresh, literary tastes is to a grown and thoroughly finished man of genius. He saw merits and beauties without being able to render reasons for his appreciation of them, or to analyse them with profound discrimination, or to praise them with glowing eloquence. Burke and Dryden wrote their very

best pamphlets or poems to the tune of Government ingots. The best books are those in which the writer remembers neither himself nor the reader, but solely the subject. Small crotchets, superstitions, and timidities clustered round Johnson like creeping parasites, and almost concealed the robust and towering oak of the forest, although it seemed to defy the thunderbolt, and under it a hundred head of cattle might find pasturage.

Some authors are not so much guides as companions. They do not walk before us wrapt in mystic obscurity, and condescending now and then to turn the bright side of their dark lanterns on us; they walk beside us carrying on a constant cheerful stream of conversation. You would not care to travel long beside a volcano or a Niagara. So you sometimes tire of writers even of the loftiest order of genius, such as Milton and Dante. How different such river-like authors as Addison and Scott!

That Johnson should have some curious feelings in the presence of his future biographer and literary undertaker is not at all unlikely. To be measured for your coffin ere you are dead, to feel around you the air of a post-mortem examination while still in perfect health, to have your witticisms as well as serious sayings recorded as if in an obituary, to be eyed with a look which seems to say, "How will

this gesture or that word tell in a biography?" to hear stifled sighs having a reference to the postponed sale of your literary remains as you tell your friend in answer to his kind inquiries that you were never better in your life; to see suppressed smiles on his hypocritical visage as he observes your pale cheek, or hears your chest-shattering cough, or silently notes your increasing wrinkles or grey hairs; to watch the eye and step of the scoundrel through a window as he hurries in on a report of your sudden apoplectic seizure, and contrast it with the fictitious joy which mantles on his face when finding you in your usual health, he grasps you warmly by the hand and cries, "May you live a thousand years!" to have your body treated as Burke says the Republicans wished to treat the Duke of Bedford, their only inquiry being "how he cuts up;"—all this cannot be pleasant to man or woman born; and yet this was submitted to consciously by Johnson, who, being permitted to read Boswell's record, might be said to enjoy the privilege of presiding at his own posthumous dissection! Johnson felt the deepest interest in the progress of Boswell's work, and though he growled at times at the small follies which the biographer chose to perpetuate in it as *his*, he smiled grimly as he saw the colossal image of himself arising to live for ever, and probably regarded Boswell's anecdotes of his own

shortcomings and sillinesses as grotesque ornaments relieving the gravity, and setting off the proportions of the structure.

Boswell could gratify Johnson with that quota of incense which was denied by the great, and which, haughty as he was, had become as necessary to his mental comfort as tea to his bodily solacement,—was always disposed to listen to his conversation, to give him texts for talk—ready to be at times his butt, and like a lightning-rod to carry off the fury of his sudden tornadoes of passion—chimed in with all his prejudices less from sycophancy than from sympathy—knew how to manage his weaknesses, and to soothe his melancholy, the rather that they were no strangers to his own constitution ; he being like Johnson on a larger scale, a compound of intellectualism and animalism, of gaiety and gloom ; by constituting Johnson a father-confessor for his faults, he made him in exchange reveal a good deal of his private history, and his errors in life ; and he suited Johnson moreover because he was the son of a Scottish laird, doing homage to the son of the keeper of a Lichfield bookstall ; because he was a Scotchman humbling himself before the great enemy of his country, and because, instead of sneering at him sometimes like Beauclerc, quizzing him like Garrick, or confronting him in argument like Burke, Boswell was always the ready unresisting

pillow for his eloquence or his wrath, his outspoken scorns and chagrins, or his sullen silence.

RELATIVE MERITS OF CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND
DISSENTING DIVINES.

I have had a little controversy by letters with a literary man I knew in London, rather high as a Churchman, about the relative merits of the Church of England and Dissenting authors. I have challenged him to show such names in his Church as Foster for sublime and original meditation ; as Hall for exquisite finish and classical dignity, both as an orator and author ; as Chalmers for broad Christian influence and overwhelming eloquence ; as Irving for demoniac force and apostolic zeal ; and as Campbell of Aberdeen and Samuel Davidson for Scripture criticism. I have said too that all the real giants of the English Church, such as Taylor, Barrow, Hooker, Warburton, and Horsley, belong to the past—the great men of Dissent chiefly to the century. The English Church is effete. The most popular sermon-writer it has produced this century is Robertson of Brighton ; and “he was a Samaritan,” a speckled bird among his brethren. Even Church heretics have no chance with Dissenting ones, such

as Martineau and Davidson. Arnold, no doubt, was a great moral power, but not a great author. Sterling was a man of remarkable accomplishments and elasticity of mind, but for genius ranks far below Carlyle, originally a Scotch Seceder. Among all the forty Bishops perhaps the best man is Tait, a Scotchman; and he is not a very great, although a very good man. This is the more remarkable, as the English Church has a freer atmosphere, and allows more diversity of opinion than most of the Dissenting bodies. But perhaps this very laxity proves relaxing, especially when connected with the fettering forms and fat enervating benefices and fellowships peculiar to that Church. Hall wrote little, but had he been a Bishop he would, after his promotion, have written nothing. Had Foster been a Rector he would have kept all his gloomy meditations to himself, and nursed his natural indolence into downright inaction. Chalmers would have been restless and active in any Church; but an English pulpit would not have given him the same scope as a Scottish one, and his violence of manner would not have allowed him to be popular with an English audience. When he did go and preach in England his fame was established, and men listened not to him, but to his prestige. Dissent is a wild border-land where strong and rugged natures are ruggedly reared and formed to do exploits.

Soon after came in a rejoinder by my able, honest and surly friend, in which he pours out a diatribe against the men I had mentioned. Chalmers is not read in England, and is thought great only in Scotland. Hall could only babble. Foster is a slow heavy coach moving along a road, with thoughts sparsely scattered like mile-stones. Irving was mad, and would have counted for a prince only in Bedlam. Campbell and Davidson are not known here. Tait is a snob, appointed Bishop of London by a dirty creature called Palmerston—brought up in Edinburgh, etc. In reply, besides defending my men, I asked him to point out the present English magnates, and whether he ranks among such “Soapy Sam, old doting Winchester,” orthodox Hampden, cold-blooded rhetoric Whately, diletante Canon Dale, etc.; or if these are not the great ones of his Church, who, in the name of the “Furies Three, and other branches of learning,” are they? All controversies of this kind become at last one-sided and unfair, but still I hold to my general principle, that the English Church is no longer what it was—the main column of Protestantism. It is an old minster, with the organ and the altar-pieces in high preservation, but undermined.

NOTES ON THE EXPLORATIONS OF THE HOLY LAND.

See an article in the *Daily Telegraph* advocating a complete exploration of the Holy Land, and speaking of the extraordinary interest felt in that country, an interest not equalled since the Crusades. I don't agree with it in thinking this a hopeful or healthy symptom. With many it is just the stirring of the last dregs of Popish superstition, with others sentimentalism, with others fashion, and with a few, real but mistaken piety. I have for my part little desire to see the Holy Land. Many interesting spots no doubt there are, but scarce one on which your faith can rest with absolute security. Even the sites of Calvary and the Sepulchre are uncertain. Tabor is not the Mount of Transfiguration, and no one can tell where it is. And then think how many places are noted only through legends! I should not like to gaze at Gadara, to which the *Telegraph* refers, and think of the swine perishing in the waters. It were too great a trial of faith. Galilee I should like particularly to see; also Lebanon and Sinai, but the latter two chiefly for their natural grandeur, Galilee for its moral interest. We need only think of Renan to feel that the greatest admiration and most intimate knowledge of sacred places may co-exist with the gravest doubts as to sacred events

and persons. The rage for the Holy Land is like all other rages untrue, and must be temporary. Besides, the difficulty and danger which still surround travelling in that country, add to it a tinge of romance which time will remove. Some of the most sacred places are now terribly vulgarised. If men were resting and building more on the grand principles and examples which came forth from that land, and less upon its mere scenery and traditions, it were far better.

ON PATRONS AND PERIODICALS.

Of literary patrons there are various sorts. There is the vain patroniser, who uses a rising writer as a stepping-stone to subserve his own personal ends. There is the unwise patroniser, who overpraises and spoils his protégé. There is the insincere patron, who is always promising and never doing anything. There is the careless half-and-half patron, who, from sheer negligence, does a man more ill than good; who first plucks him from the sea, and then lets him drop through his hands into deeper water. There is the zealous patron, who first admires and then envies his man. There is the sensitive and selfish patron, who is always exacting

the interest of his lent aid in full tale. There is the belated patron, who, as Dr. Johnson has it, "encumbers you with help." There is the haughty patron, who doles out his praise in scanty dribbles, and with an air of insufferable insolence of condescension. And there is the manly, sincere, kindly, and true-hearted patron, like Scott, Southey, or Lord Lytton, who bases his blame or praise, encouragement or coldness, upon principle and right feeling, and does to another precisely what he would have others to do to him. After all, the best patron is a man himself, who can call himself with a slight variation *Benjamin*, the son of my (*own*) right hand.

Periodicals should be pervaded by unity; they should not be bundles of sticks or baskets of fragments. They should not be butchers' shops made up of scattered portions, and none of these portions alive.

Some writers never for an instant sink the grandeur of their absolute "Shall," abate the solemnity of the editorial "We," or allow even a toe to peep out from below the Pythonic mantle which enwraps them, lest perchance it should turn out to be the member of a Lilliputian foot, and lest some iron heel should be prepared to trample it in the dust.

A sectarian journal is not only filled but suffo-

cated with its idea. That is generally a small and narrow one, yet, like a little object or coin between the eye and the sun, it suffices to exclude the great universe, and to form a minor universe of its own. Through its warping, bedimming or magnifying medium, all things and thoughts, and books and persons, are viewed. A great man in this light often dwindles ; and a small man expands immensely ; the cipher becomes a thousand, and the thousand sinks into a cipher ; large interests and objects are overlooked, and the fate of nations seems trifling compared to the sale of newspapers. Such a periodical becomes curious as an inverted and distorted miniature of the world. It destroys all true proportions, and confuses all kinds and sizes of pretensions.

The *Edinburgh Review* rushed into Literature like an eagle, and hung back from no quarry however lofty or however humble ; it now snatched up the bleating lamb, now rent the royal lion-cub, and now pounced upon the singing-birds of the grove.

Christopher North was always sincere as well as enthusiastic in his attachment to his native land. Some of our young Scottish authors are not sufficiently national either in poetry or prose, are forgetting their "puir auld mither," and becoming the adopted children of a more richly attired, but not a

fairer, a prouder, or a purer nation. But Wilson when he donned his "Sporting Jacket," did so amidst the moors of Caledonia; when he spake of streams or cottages, the streams were the Tweed, the Tay, the Spey, the Clyde, the Cart, and the Cona; the cottages those which send up their smoke each morning and evening parallel with the simple song of praise to Scotland's blue morning heaven; and on whomsoever he might shower that praise which fell on genius all over the world like autumn sunlight on autumn foliage, adding beauty to the beautiful, and glory even to the decayed, the richest gleams were ever reserved for our own Burns, our own Ettrick Shepherd, Campbell, and Scott.

AN AUTHOR'S EARLIEST PRODUCTION GENERALLY
THE BEST.

Very often an author's earliest production is the best. Probably this is the rule, although with exceptions. Burns thought the earliest "bairn of his brain" the best. Tennyson's "Mariana," "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," etc., are his best small poems, although his "In Memoriam" is his most elaborate work. Thomson never got beyond his "Winter" for power, although his "Castle of

Indolence" is more finished; nor Wordsworth beyond his "Lyrical Ballads;" nor Shelley beyond his "Revolt of Islam;" and Keats had he lived to a hundred would never have surpassed nor equalled "Hyperion," his last, but still a young work. Shakespeare's earliest dramas are probably as good as any he ever wrote. Milton indeed, and Young, reached their fullest power late in life, and Cervantes wrote his "Don Quixote" when nearly seventy. Chaucer and Burke are also exceptions. Burke's genius—Buckle to the contrary notwithstanding—burned brightest in his Reflections on the French Revolution, his speeches on Hastings, and his Regicide Peace. But "Caleb Williams" was Godwin's earliest and best novel; Scott's "Waverley" is as good as any that followed, perhaps in some respects better; and the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" is his best poem, if not his most interesting poetical tale, which the "Lady of the Lake" is. Wilson's "Isle of Palms" is his best poem too, and his first contributions to *Blackwood* are his raciest prose. Byron reached his maximum at thirty, by which time he had written his "Childe Harold," and the first and best cantos of "Don Juan." "Cain," no doubt, was later; but then Byron was never permitted to become old; had he been so, there were symptoms of begun exhaustion. Conceive Byron surviving his poetic vein twenty or thirty years! A quenched

volcano with boys playing at chuck-farthing with its cinders, and a tavern built in its core! Campbell never surpassed his "Pleasures of Hope," although there are better things in "Gertrude," which, as a whole, is inferior. His finest lyrics and "O'Conner's Child" were rather early productions; while "Theodric," "Pilgrim of Glencoe," etc., are poor belated spasms, old men's children. Thomas Aird never equalled his "Devil's Dream," nor has Samuel Fergusson his "Forging of the Anchor." Crabbe's "Village" was better than his "Tales of the Hall." Goethe's early productions, and Schiller's too, were the most powerful, though faultiest of their writings; they made their reputation; there was some growth afterwards, but more polishing. Calvin wrote part of his "Institutes" at twenty-five, Pollok his "Course of Time" at twenty-six. Allan Cunningham's early Galwegian ballads and songs were by far the best of his poems. De Quincey's "Confessions" was an early production. Coleridge's "Anciente Marinere," "Love," etc., all his real poetry, was written in his youth. And so with Browning's "Paracelsus," and Mrs. Browning's "Lady Geraldine's Courtship."

FRAGMENTS.

WAS greatly struck when I saw in the National Gallery, Edinburgh, Etty's pictures of Judith and Holofernes, and Benaiah killing the two lion-like men of Moab. What muscular power, savage, Michael-Angelo-like grandeur of anatomy, and what superb colouring ! It struck me like an Apocalypse, so new and strong the style. I seemed for the first time to have met a painter after my own heart. I wish he had given Benaiah killing a lion in a pit on a snowy day, the grand old savage rendered doubly fierce by the unusual sensation of cold biting his limbs, with open mouth, wildly dishevelled mane, eyes shining in the pit like torches, and paws tearing at Benaiah's shield, while above him towers the hero, lifting up his spear for one decisive blow—for he will not strike a second time—meant for the lion's mouth and midriff, into which his eye too is glaring down, while above them both a snow-storm is falling, as if seeking, but seeking in vain, to shroud the combatants, whom in reality it brings out into more terrible relief by its leprous light. Perhaps in this

close and dreadful duel, Landseer should have painted the Beast, but only Etty could have given the Man.

Sheridan had a vein of strong good sense, which he brought more effectually and entirely to bear upon public affairs, as none of it was employed upon the care of his private conduct. He was like a mother who feeds her children, but cannot feed herself, at her own breast. He was unshaken at the time of the Mutiny of the Nore, probably on the principle that great blackguards are often coolest in a shipwreck or pestilence.

By the way, Byron's enemies think that in his expedition to Greece he deserved little more credit than a ruined debauchee who, in his despair, enlists.

In 1814 Napoleon gained victories without an army, and made manœuvres supply the want of men. So Sheridan for forty-six years lived upon stratagem, cajolery, cleverness, and impudence. His career resembled French cookery, by the skill of which a nettle or two, a bone or two, well sauced, sometimes supply materials for splendid dinners, and are made to feed large and hungry companies.

Nelson was a one-eyed gamecock run all to spur and beak, rather than a hero. He had amazing pluck, but pluck is no more valour than cunning is wisdom. He was a mannikin too in stature; and in the infernal regions of war, imps, or "essences of devil," as Foster calls them, such as Alexander the Great, Suwarrow, and Napoleon, have always been favourites. He was maimed besides; and the spectacle of a little man, half blown away by gunpowder and yet ruling with his stump sceptre the British Navy, had a peculiarly poignant effect. Had he been French, his countrymen would have deified him as they did the demon out of elbows, Marat, the old grinning Death's-Head of Ferney, or the little skinny corporal of Austerlitz. Indeed, since the days of the gallant Widdrington, "who fought upon his stumps," heroes such as Nelson and Raglan have always been more interesting for their mutilations; and perhaps had Wellington lost an eye, he had seemed greater behind his telescope, and had Napoleon limped on one leg, he had led the Old Guard to triumph at Waterloo! A head is almost the only thing absolutely necessary to a general; he has little use for an arm or limb, and none at all, as things are now managed, for a heart.

In some writers—Coleridge, Landor, etc.—there are obscurities which I would never wish away;

they are the black feathers mingled with the glorious hues of the wing of the golden eagle, which we should not wish to be moulted, but left as they are.

The thinking of Demosthenes is almost always inflamed, though never inflated, commonplace. The stream of his oratory runs strongly, but runs in a strict, direct, and narrow rut, never in a broad rushing stream. In Cicero you find a philosopher, a *littérateur*, a man of vast learning and accomplishments, flowering into an orator. He was not a lowly bush, but a great tree in flower. So, too, it was with Burke.

Cicero crushes not himself but his foes under his ornaments. He hurls on their unhappy heads orient pearls and gold, and these come down like a shower of thunder-stones.

What a grand man was Marcus Aurelius! What a union in him of mental power and nobility of nature—an outlying Christian, if ever there were one. Yet how melancholy some of his utterances! This will be laid to the account of his not being wholly a Christian; but they are not worse than many things in Pascal, Foster, and others. He had also a fine perception of the imaginative. I notice

nothing miraculous about him ; but what is better, the complete result of a combination of concurring natural causes, old pure Roman blood, an excellent training, a good mother, and an admirable adopted father. These, along with a finely-built mind and heart, enabled him to do the will of God ; and then he knew of the doctrine that was of God, in moral matters at least, as well as the early Christians, and without some of the doubtful ingredients in their faith and practice.

Homer's hell is just the fleet in a fog ; coarse without being clear ; unideal and repulsive, not through its positive elements of terror, but through its withering negations. *Nothing* is the most appalling of conceptions. His hell is not so pathetic as Virgil's nor so sublime as Milton's. Homer saw what a hell lay in simple cheerlessness and stagnation.

The difference between the ancient and the modern worlds in beliefs, manners, thoughts, and feelings is as great as between those of two different planets. Even those who now profess to believe and think as the Hebrews did, do not. They not only believe less and less firmly, but they do not credit things in the *same sense* ; they do not believe

the *same things*. They hold the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Judgment, the Resurrection, and so forth, in a dwindled and diluted form. Even Popery, in the minds of Newman and Manning, is not what it was to Bellarmine and Aquinas.

Some great sceptical men stand up as vast mountains of doubt, hoary on the summit, with a cold rayless sun glittering powerlessly above, and with doubts, sarcasms, and sophisms dropping like avalanches, "thunderbolts of snow," down their sides for evermore. So with David Hume in the past and J. S. Mill now.

D'Aubigné covers the rugged face of Luther with paint and roseate hues, bedaubing instead of beautifying it. Michelet is his truest limner.

Much so-called science seeks to exhaust the universe of its mysteries by counting *seriatim* the sand-grains of which it is composed.

According to Mayer's and Tyndall's views of the Sun, it is kept bright like a pugilist's face, by constant pommelling. It is the great Butt of the uni-

verse—not Apollo with his arrows shooting around the sky, but a target everlastingly shot at! No doubt a furnace must be fed; the sun may require fuel, but the fun of the thing is the way in which the fuel reaches him. It is tossed in and at him as though coals were discharged by a battery on a burning forest, and every supply reaches him in thunder! Talk of the silent sun! why, it is the most uproarious body in space, unless indeed all his brethren be supplied with heat in the same demonstrative way, and then what a storm-chorus! That, I presume, is the song of the stars! I can hardly, for my part, swallow this theory.

Read a paper on the Spectrum of the Sun, from which it appears that his atmosphere contains an iron element, and that his body is at a white heat—contrary to Herschel and Arago, who maintained that it was a black mass. How fearfully and wonderfully made the Universe is! Is God literally a consuming fire, or is fire God? May not the fire in the sun be self-kindled, and for ever burning? Who can tell? Our fire requires fuel, but the sun's may not, but feed upon itself, that self being everlastingly renewed by some necessary process. Then, like the Parsees of old, we might, on looking to the great orb, "unite to magnify the Ever-Living"!

To find out the chemical constituents of the sun is a great achievement. "Weigh the sun," says Tennyson. Why! we can put him into our crucible and take him to pieces, and make that proud orb

"Still as a slave before his Lord."

A gush of unexpected sunshine is the smile of Apollo himself; not the glance of the loveliest and most beloved female, though she were Venus, could surpass that, in creating "the thoughts that breathe and the words that burn." The thought is perhaps slow to come; a cloud passes from the Sun, and lo! it enters on the beam; or the thought is there, but the line labours and the words move slow, a fresh sparkle from the fount of day, and expression "waits on you like a menial," and even outruns your desire. "Great and glorious orb!" surely we were one day thine? Doubtless thou art our father, for we came from God through thee, and our souls as well as bodies retain some traces of thy fiery beams; and to thee, it may be, we return, on our way to God again!

Read in *Macmillan* an account of early discoveries in Australia, which gives a picturesque aspect to a country which of late years has seemed too much a great vulgar gold-mine crowded with

Demases, By-ends, and Money-loves, like that anticipated Diggin' in the "Pilgrim's Progress." It has almost a weird effect to follow these men in their daring search for lost rivers as for lost souls, and finding these after long disappointment pursuing their way to the sea, and swollen by tributary streams, without which they would have gone down for ever. Emblem of minds with no original force, fed by other and greater spirits! Emblem of all minds struggling toward God as their ultimate dwelling and home, but unable to attain this without His own aid!

Why do men desire Immortality? Because they feel that this world is not worthy of God, and hardly of man; because there are glories in God which are not, and cannot be, revealed till the future; because there are mysteries in God which can then only, and may then be disclosed, and powers and tendencies in man, which require a larger field for their development than this little life. I have no sympathy with the desire many have for Immortality, merely to have their wrongs avenged, or their merits acknowledged, or for any purposes of mere retribution or compensation whatever. These are comparatively mean and despicable objects, and are not likely to be gratified.

I feel chafed when thinking of Scotland, and of the influences which are keeping down her shrewd intellect, invincible perseverance, and noble, fiery genius—an effete yet tyrannical form of faith—the nightmare of a Confession, and the terror of the popular cry of heresy. These prevent or punish all bold and novel religious speculation. How rich Scotland is in poets, philosophers, mechanical geniuses, historians, novelists; how poor in theologians! We have really not a single great religious thinker or writer; not one to be named with Paley, Watson, or Warburton, far less with Jeremy Taylor, Barrow, Hooker, or even Hall, Foster, Robertson of Brighton, or with the vast Continental array of critics and profound religious inquirers.

Scotland is certainly the stiffest country in religious matters on the face of the earth. And I am sometimes thankful for this, since the Scotch, without a rather severe form of religion, would have been rather a wild people. They could not hitherto afford to want it. The English get on tolerably without it, never, as a nation, having had much of it at any time—see Buckle and hear Carlyle. The *perfervidum ingenium* of Scotland is *ferox* as well as *perfervid*,—it is, and has been, the better of being cabined and coerced. Then their Presbyterianism stands rooted in heroic blood. But they must by and by yield to the influences of the age, and the young are already yielding.

II. REFLECTIVE.

THE FIRST FEELING OF THE GREAT PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE.

WHAT sends the boy away from his fellows into secret places, the heart of the wood, its very deepest and darkest heart, or to the neighbourhood of some lonely cataract among the mountains, or to some small, grim, and silent lake reposing amid distant hills, or to the river-side at night when the stars are coming out over the northern ridges, and he feels as if they were mighty tears, "such tears as angels shed," and the voice of the stream beneath sounds like the lone sob of a traveller pursuing an endless and difficult way, or into a moonlit solitary chamber when all the house is "dead asleep"? It may be the first obscure sweet yearning in the heart which afterwards becomes that strangest of things, boyish love; or it may be a taste for luxurious, imaginative, but vague thought; or it may be that feelings of the awe and mystery of Death, Life, the Infinite and God, which, during the day, had been in the soul, but have not ventured out till emboldened by

evening, it flew forth like a night-bird, spreading her wing to the stars. Sometimes all these feelings have blended together into one singular compound of budding passion, dreamy reverie, and solemn meditation. Night in the country, and in the Highlands especially, always inspires awe. This is produced in the first instance by the sense of solitude imposed on the man or the boy, by the black shadows of the mountains which gird the vale; by the few melancholy gleams of light from cottages and farmhouses, all going out early, and one by one; by the voices of the night and the wailing streams near at hand; the cry of distant cataracts pealing out their long, long unmitigated plaint, as if refusing to be comforted; the wind-moved woods; the sudden stir and startle of the bracken; the hoofs of horses echoing from far-off stony roads; the bark of dog or fox; and the deep guttural of the mountaineer's voice, heard suddenly approaching through the forest, or high up the midnight brae. Then there are recollections of early tales of ghosts, fairies, witches, and devils, which arise without any effort of your own, and against your will, the moment you have left light and friends behind you; and you feel now as if some supernatural being were in your rear, and your only safety lay in your going on at your utmost speed, and keeping your eyes to the ground; and now, as if the *Fiend* himself were coming to meet

you on the pine-shadowed road! Terrible too, though dear to the young imagination, the sight of the stars resting on the mountains; the constellations stooping from the sky, bowed down under their own exceeding weight of glory; the meteors suddenly flashing out, circling round, and just when you are beginning to feel them near, rushing away with an impish laugh into darkness;—now the moon of midnight

“gazing on earth intense,
As if she saw some wonder walking there;”

and anon, the northern lights with their breathless flight and fantastic brilliance—

“Like fiery arrows shot aloft from some unmeasured bow.”

All this, apart from the thought which by and by finds out an unconsecrated but divine temple, where it loves to offer a wild worship, and to spread a bold and broad yet trembling wing, has a spiritual, thrilling, solemnising influence on the young soul, and baptizes it with an inspiration from above, every drop in which descends like a shooting star!

But soon along with this mere, though mighty, poetic charm, there begin to mingle the first mysterious inquiries, doubts, fears, and divine despairs of youth—of youth at least in this age of ours, when Doubt leans over the cradle, and shadows the brows and bosoms of the nursery. Wordsworth, in “The Excursion,” describes Margaret’s child, the child of

poverty and sorrow, "sighing amid her playthings." We knew one, the light of a comfortable and happy home, sighing amid her playthings too, because her soul was oppressed by the questions—"Who made God?" and "How did sin come into the world?" Death overheard that sigh, and soon answered it by taking her away to a sphere where such mysteries may either be made plain, or appear at least like clouds in a pleasant picture, tantalising and oppressing not, but adding to the beauty and brightness around. Singular it is, though often observed, how all, or nearly all the difficulties which puzzle philosophers, puzzle children. We feel the bit in our infant mouth at which we are doomed to fret and foam all our life long. One of the difficulties that oppresses us is the impossibility of forming the slightest conception of or belief in creation. That vast system of sky and stars, sun and earth, appears eternal. God made it, we are told, but we do not as children believe any more than understand this. That light, so old yet young, so overwhelming in power, descending ever from its own blue heaven as from a precipice, so searching in influence and vision, so capricious yet regular, seems self-made and divine. Every child is a Pantheist, and Nature and God to him are One. In vain to tell him that some of the stars have gone out and perished, and hence they cannot be ever-

lasting. The child replies, or at least feels, that although the leaves drop from the trees, and the trees produce new ones, the life in the others mixes with that of the earth ; and he feels a doubt, since leaves when they drop do not die, whether the few stars which have vanished may not have gone to swell the blaze of some of their brethren, and been simply transformed. "All seem eternal now," and these starry tresses are the blanched locks of the Ancient of Days !

This Divinity too the boyish imagination beholds in the earth as well as in the heavens, and hence the awe or panic-terror felt in the great solitudes of woods and mountains, of seas and wastes of snow, arising not from the loneliness but from the strange thought that we are never less alone than when thus alone ; that that snow is looking at us through its million glistening eyes ; that that quiet forest or dim moor is listening to our steps as we move along ; that yonder granite mountain up in the air is "God o'erhead" bending above us ; that when a fir-cone falls and smites us, it is a divine rebuke ; and that when the hail dashes on our face, or the lightning for a moment blinds our eyes, it is the Divine Hand that is smiting us. Hence the burning summer ray is the eye of Deity assaulting us ; the blackness of the starless night is His frown falling around our path, and the poet seems faith-

fully to represent a portion of the truth when he sings—

“ Nor dim, nor red, like God’s own Head,
The glorious Sun uprist.”

It may be said that this is Pantheism *plus* Personification, and therefore inconsistent with itself; but it is the Pantheism of childhood.

From the vague yet influential sense of Divinity in the young soul springs the rapture infinite, and in after life, utterly unproducible, with which the boy or girl gazes on the moon, especially at midnight, and seems absolutely to float away into her sphere, and follow her in her immortal journey. But frequently it is terror; a far deeper form of the feeling than that which mere belief in ghosts produces, because from the one fear we can shelter by entering our own dwelling or meeting a companion on the lonely road, but whither can we go from that other Presence—whither flee from that other Spirit? Yes! Spirit, but one that seems identical with all forms and sights and sounds of the material universe.

To the imaginative soul, thus already full of the delights and terrors of creation, comes the common creed, presented usually in its roughest shape, with all its appurtenances of total depravity, reprobating wrath as well as electing grace, the salvation of few, the everlasting damnation of many, a literal devil, and a literal hell of fire and brimstone.

The advent of that creed is always an era in the young history. The first effect is usually sheer unbounded astonishment mingled with incredulity—an unbelief that dares not speak out, but whispers to the heart that this cannot be wholly true, although it is so transcendently sublime and wonderful that it can hardly be a mere fable. Then if this marvellous version of the universe is told by a dear friend in the accents of warm-hearted and pathetic affection, the wonder dies away in tears, and the child is converted, weeping, to the dogmas which those he loves best, weeping, communicate, probably when Sabbath evening has cast its shadows over the chamber, and has made the landscape without solemn as a churchyard. Then sometimes arises a fierce zeal in the breast for the doctrines taught, because they seem to form a part of the family inheritance, and the circle of charity narrows insensibly, and a luxury is felt at the thought that those who laugh at, or despise the orthodox creed are doomed to perdition. And when some frightful pictures are shown, exhibiting the majority of the race trooping along the broad way to eternal fires, pity for their punishment is felt to be sympathy with their sins, and we are expected to glory in their deserved destiny, and we do so. When after this we look up to Nature, it is as if a winter-cloud had passed over it. Its beauties laugh at us no more,

and on its old terrors a "browner horror" has fallen; to the original fear of the Infinite is added that of the Eternal; those lightnings, tempests, falling snows, and raging waves continue to be expressions of the wrath of God; but that God is now felt more as an everlasting enemy and judge, and these displays of His vengeance are only the first drops of a shower of unmitigated and unquenchable fire! In the former emotions there was fear but no fanaticism, no hatred of others; in the latter, aversion to God's supposed enemies is blended with increased terror of Himself, very partially mingled and softened with love. Sometimes against this young fanaticism, ere it has fairly coiled around you, there is a reactionary struggle, bringing up again your early feelings of unsettlement and desire to kick against the pricks. In this mood ebullitions of discontent with the popular creed break out into words; but if they gratify yourself, they grieve your beloved friends, who sigh over you as over a reprobate. Such reactions, however, are short; and if one of your relations should die, the conflagration of grief as it cools down casts you into a shape of pietism of the severest type. In this, nevertheless, you find, after a little, a sensuous pleasure—pleasure which mingles with the susceptibilities of opening manhood. Experience of this feeling in early life leads one to understand the delight which many

of the most ignorant and previously depraved people take in a merely sentimental and passionate form of religion. Their amatory and sensual feelings only change their channel; and although the Tabernacle is better society than the purlieus of Covent Garden, yet both are unhealthy, and perhaps equally far from the kingdom of Heaven—*i.e.* from true, intelligent, and moral religion. We have known youths of promise reaching this stage of morbid religiosity and never going further, but allowing the feeling to stunt their intellectual stature, deaden their aspirations, detain them from active usefulness, and reduce them to caricatures of Cowper in their timid imbecility; while others of a more cheerful, masculine and progressive character flirt for a season with this baptized Delilah, till, plunged in severe study or energetic action they learn to feel, "This at least is not a celestial child, nor the lawful mistress of our affections," and so "puff the prostitute away." It is curious, years afterwards, to recur to books read under such a hallucination, and admired and wept over then, and to find how flat in reality, and fanatical while sincere, was their language; how narrow their views, and how their power and charm had been derived from the tearful yet luxurious glory which grief, acting on the young unbudded senses, had shed in a rich rainbow-light on their pages.

At College, doubt and sometimes distraction is produced by the diverse theories which are there propounded on all subjects, human and divine; and even the professorial defence of miracles and of the existence of a God often starts difficulties, like demons, which it is unable to lay. Lord Byron mentions the case of a friend of his who had been a Theist, but whose faith in God's existence was completely shattered by a college sermon or lecture in its defence. So the raw but reverential student, who had perhaps, like Hall, buried his materialism and cognate heresies in his father's grave, is astonished to find his refuted thoughts brought forward again, to be again rebutted indeed, but still brought forward, as having been the thoughts of the most eminent philosophers, and is half-chagrined and half-elated as he hears those doubts and daring conjectures which had crossed his own mind on the grey autumn fields, under the black winter skies, and by the lonely river-sides, though denounced by his teachers, yet sanctioned by the names of Spinoza and Hobbes, Hume and Descartes. Nothing delights a mind more at this stage of its studies than the Berkeleian speculation as to the non-existence of matter. Just when something of the first gloss of glory has dropped from the universe, as seen by the young, it is renewed by this fine theory, which reduces all things to a fairy vision—moon, sun and

stars to pictures—the earth to a dream swimming before the half-sleeping eye, and men and women to

“Gay creatures of the elements,
That in the colours of the rainbow live
And play i’ th’ plighted clouds.”

Wordsworth alludes to this when he speaks, in his poem on the Cuckoo, of the earth as

“An unsubstantial fairy place
That is meet home for thee;”

and in his ode on Intimations of Immortality. He himself was, at one time, so strongly under this impression that he had to hold to a post to steady himself. In such moods, when the clouds over the mountain-summits seem to assume the appearance of the mountains below them, one loves to fancy them of the same material, and so in a sense they are;—

“These gravitation’s work, and those her play.”

About this time, too, and springing, as in Wordsworth’s case, partly from the ideal theory,—the strangest and most indescribable doubt—a doubt which, by the way, may be found described in Disraeli’s “Contarini Fleming,” passes over the mind as to personal identity—a feeling as if our individuality were a mere dream, nay, a feeling of the utter unreality of all things, which would last for an hour at a time and pass away, leaving a ghostly and almost terrific sensation behind it. I remember of

an afternoon hour of this character spent under a cloudy sky, while passing through clover-fields, with the river singing its deep monotone beside them, and how, when I awoke, I prayed *not* to "dream again," and seemed to have neared an abyss of giddiness and fear, if not of derangement.

Such feelings are never altogether lost in after life, but often reappear in the shape of the most overpowering sense of the evanishing and apparitional nature of all things—of that stream or storm called Being—a stream ever flowing, and changing as it flows—a storm ever blowing, and assuming new forms and phases as it hurries on. We feel that suns are in reality as fleeting as meteors, and our body as yonder rivulet in which we see its shadow. Lucretius thought the universe made by a dance of atoms. But the universe is, we feel, a dance of atoms, and that dance is everlasting. Orion is dancing up there as really as the *Aurora Borealis*. The Milky Way is dancing solemnly upon the floor of night. And does not our own frame, in the course of seven years, thus get rid of every particle of its old matter? Nothing in the creation is permanent but LAW, LIFE, and LOVE.

AUTUMN GLEANINGS.

Surely, as George Herbert says, "of fair things the Autumn is fair;" and of fair autumnal things, the light and shade which meet and mingle on a mountain river-side are the fairest. Yet Nature seldom satisfies, and often, when it is just about to do so, some dark thought arises, some painful reminiscence shoots over the soul, or there occurs some small revelation of the infirmity and selfishness of human nature, and all is disturbed, even as a stone or pebble dropped into a placid pool, on which sleeps the rainbow, produces instant disenchantment, and the unity of the dream seldom returns.

Witnessed to-day a grand thunderstorm. Where I stood all was light and sunshine, but eastward rose a chain of dark lofty clouds like black Alps, against which lightnings were ever and anon flashing, and beyond which thunders were heard roaring; while above me was a faint but brightening and completely arched rainbow—altogether a combination of beauty and grandeur, hope and terror, the Law and the Gospel, the Sinaitic message surmounted, bound in, and beautified by the rainbow of Divine love!

. Saw some memorials of the late savage storm. In one wood I saw trees in scores scattered on the

ground. What a melancholy spectacle is a fallen tree—especially a pine, with its green top and up-torn earthy roots, a ghastly combination of life and death! By and by it becomes, as Jude hath it, “twice dead,” withered at top as well as uprooted below. Yet always it seems more gigantic in its downfall than when standing. It lies “low but mighty still,” with a sort of scorn, you imagine, at the tempest of mere transient wind which had power to overturn *it*, the old Titan! tossed up toward the sky through its curling roots as through forked tongues!

No sight is so delightful in pensive and pleasing suggestiveness as an October wood with its millions of withered and kindled leaves, edged here with lightning, starred there with gold, and yonder, like the angel in the Apocalypse, “clothed with a rainbow;” while a stream is passing by, its voice at one time murmuring delight, and at another moaning in sorrow, beside the triumphant deathbed of the forest, and the sad smile of the sun seemed to say, “My light shall never gild this gorgeous scene again!” And I would sigh as I sought to realise in imagination the annual apparition of an American forest with its enormous trees spread out for countless miles, and shining with an intensity and variety of colours of which we in this country

have no conception—the air mild as June, the sky cloudless, the wind, when wind there is, blowing balm, and the October sun reflected by the endless woods, glorious in the brightest yellow, the richest red, the purest pink, and the deepest purple and mauve colours, which turn the forest into one conflagration, where, like Moses' bush of old in the wilderness, every leaf is on fire and not one of them is consumed. And in my dreams this "Vision of Trees" would appear at times, and give me unmixed gladness unknown to my waking hours.

Another fine day. How I grudge to see these beautiful days sinking so swiftly, one after another, like leaves dropping into the passing stream! Alas! our autumns themselves are numbered, and in rapid series are passing away. This is a solemn, almost dreary thought. We should be thankful for the thorns of life, else the loss of its roses, and of the tree itself, were altogether intolerable. As autumn gives me at least the keenest, most boyish sense of life and nature, blended with impulses of higher mood and thoughts too deep for tears, its departure is proportionally sorrowful, especially when I feel that though old age is not yet arrived, youth is past.

Singular sight in my fireplace just now. A large log of wood is lying with a tiny tongue of flame

which has pierced through its heart, but has not assimilated any part of it. Yet the fiery wedge is in, and the flicker of the thin flame predicts the approaching triumph. Emblem of the present position of truth and genuine religion in the world, and of what its future victory must be. Ah! as I write, the tiny flame is quenched, the log is still almost entire, although in other directions the fire is curling around its sides, and the whole must soon burn.

What a magnificent sky! Venus in the west—large, near, as if dropping a ripe fruit from Heaven—divided from Orion by the young Moon which has not strength to eclipse the constellations, but seems rather showing them off with mild genial beam; while, nearly at the zenith, the Great Bear in proud pre-eminence is towering over the night; and in every quarter of the sky big and glittering stars are making up the complement of glory! The sky is covered with vast fleeces of white cloud, with occasional breaks of the dark-blue heaven between; and in the south the full moon stealing through the clouds, like a bright spectre, half veiled as if herself afraid.

“Not a breath disturbed the solemn scene.”

Surely souls which can enjoy such spectacles must be made for higher destinies than earth can furnish.

But conceive of one of the American battles going on under such a sky—Hell's red billows raging below the celestial canopy !

A beautiful autumn evening this has become, with great lines or rather strata of crimson cloud stretching from the west to the zenith, and a yellow two-thirds moon in the south. A most lovely forenoon too, as if the sun had been supplied with fresh light from an angel's vial. Nay, he seemed another less ardent sun, like the sun that shines upon the "land of souls."

A tree giving up its leaves at this season is an interesting and very suggestive sight. Sometimes it parts with them slowly, reluctantly, and in silence; at other times it shakes them off swiftly and indignantly, like Lear tearing away his grey locks. Sometimes each falls down solitary and with a quiet sigh; sometimes they jump, like mad suicides, in multitudes to the ground with a wrathful rustle; sometimes they are all shrivelled and withered up like the aged; again they are only slightly yellowed, like men of middle life, and sometimes they are quite fresh and green, like the young. And before they are entirely stript off, the new buds, like a new generation, begin to make their appearance. How melancholy to find now that whenever you

touch the leaves, however gently, they drop, or rather dissolve, instantly, like the dust of butterflies' wings; and how more melancholy still, to see a green *yald* leaf lying as good as dead upon the ground!

Sky and scenery this evening really divine, what with clouds surrounding the sun like purple curtains—the gleams of intense light finding their way between them—the green riches of the strath, backed by the blue mountains, and in the south, the full moon, at first broad, weak in light, and shadowy, but as the evening advanced deepening in hue, and narrowing in surface till it became a mass of the most fine gold, a great nugget, flashing through the gathering darkness of the night as from a mine.

This evening absolutely enchanting in its loveliness; what with the red clouds of the zenith, the yellow clouds of the west, the full moon sparkling like a silver charger in the south, the green leaves of the trees and bushes, the grass and the yellow fields in the distance. It might make an atheist worship. May it make me more humble and sincere in my admiration and love of the ever-living and ever-loving God! Was struck yestreen by the apparent magnitude of the moon's disc. It seemed two planets in one,—so large, round, and near, above

the southern woods it shone. As I write, the clouds are turning out a "golden lining" on the eve, and the most beautiful, almost unearthly light is shining on my page. Ah! I see it is because yellow clouds have gathered in the high east, which are still seeing the sun, and telegraphing to all nature that they do. I have frequently, this autumn, felt what terror dwells in extreme beauty, and thought what an awful place Heaven must be at first to the very best of men.

Out again looking at the evening. Great clouds in the west are throwing a deep sombre shade over the mountains and the vale, while glimpsing above them the rays of the sun have turned two hills to the north, which resemble twins in form and size, into two pillars of gold—Castor and Pollux let me call them,—so beautiful and godlike they look in their transient transfiguration. What an unspeakable thing the blue dimness of autumn, clearer than summer day, and lovelier far! and its sudden gleams of light like sudden smiles from some countenance more celestial than the sun.

What a sky I have seen in the west and north, —a blaze of gold darkening into blood with red fishes swimming in the sea, into which the sun had gone down, while eastward, on the other hand, amidst clouds of varied and delicate hues, there

shone out the white, large, almost full moon, and then, as if afraid to interfere with the marvellous effects of the sunset, she retired under the veil again ; but at intervals peered out, seeming to look at and admire what she dared not emulate.

Saw unexpectedly on Tuesday, after rain and darkness, an apparition of the Night. She seemed "hiding herself," like God; and few could have seen her as I most casually did, with the moon half-waned in the south-east, Jove due east, Arcturus and his wand in the west, and the north all brilliant with the Plough. It burst on me, and how I did rejoice at the sight !

Thunder has been rolling around in various directions to-day, and the clouds have those grand electric rifts and cloven towering mountains they show in a stormy summer day. They talk of a single peal this morning ten minutes long ! It must have sounded like one of the preliminary peals of the last day.

The clouds this evening are towering, Alpine, massive and magnificent, but cold like the thoughts of some haughty Philosopher who is not a whit nearer heaven's warmth, though he has risen above earth.

What a heaven to-night ! Such a canopy over us poor worms of the dust ! What an arch of

triumph over earth with its sins, miseries, and graves! Yet we can feel the contrast, and that is something. We know our own littleness and God's greatness; and self-knowledge is important, though it were only to know oneself a devil. A clod cannot know itself to be a clod, no, nor an eagle to be an eagle; but man knows he is a man, and can say, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him!"

A day of considerable cold, and of startling spiritual clearness, the sky purged, the ground swept, and the whole forming a garnished palace for the entrance of the moon. Last night I saw the prelude of her rising in a rim of light tinging the south-east, like a prophecy of dawn. In half-an-hour I looked out again, and there she was with the upper third of her noble brow cut off, but still she walked in superb beauty, the Queen of the Night, more magnificent in her mutilation than the Great Bear or Orion, with their unchangeableness of form, and immensity of distance; and I fancied both darting down starry envy at the waning yet immortal satellite.

Grand confusion in the sky yestreen, after the thunder. Clouds of the most fantastic forms. Here an Alpine, or *plusquam*-Alpine range of mountains, there a yellow cloud, shaped exactly

like the Sphinx, over which as we looked there passed a dark speck which, on the west side, assumed the appearance of a man preparing to leap with extended arm and leg stretched out behind! To the north were enormous white watery clouds, like sheeted, thin-blooded shades. In the south were some skyey Matterhorns, precipices of red vapour; and right east stood a massive mountain of pure gold rising from what seemed a blue sea; massive and yet changing its form every minute, now two-peaked, now a solid battlement like a castle, and now a great golden horn, a

“Gigantic flame conversing with the sun.”

Have just seen the eclipse of the sun,—first the darkness creeping like an insect over the northern limb, then becoming larger and more distinctly perceptible till it seemed as if a portion of the orb had disappeared; then came out the horns and the half-darkened sun, and then clouds came over and hid the phenomenon for a while. Through them, however, he shone at times, now entire but in faint outline, now protruding a peak of fire rising above the dark cloud, and now seeming a bright eye gradually waxing dim and fading away. I was just going off, thinking that the sight was over, when lo! he appeared again, lying on his back, methought, with the moon's shadow resting like an incubus over him;

and then began slowly to descend behind a bank of clouds, looking like the horned head of a demon, the horns gradually sinking to two tips. One of these soon disappeared, and the other for a minute or so shone alone with intense brilliance, till its time likewise came, and it set like a spark in the brown west. A grand and uncommon spectacle. This night most beautiful, the moon nearly full, Jove in great splendour far down the west, Mars a "ruddy shield" in the east, Sirius white as a snow-cloud in the south, Orion struggling to show himself through the overpowering moonlight, the Plough hanging heavy-laden with glory in the northern sky; and many other mighty and nameless stars magnified by the frost, and dispersed through the heavens like diamonds new dropped by some divine and lavish hand. Dear little P. was leaping like a fairy in the radiance, and seemed the moon's sweet minion—

"A little elf
Singing, dancing to herself."

Another August gone like a dream! Broken in character for the last three or four days, but still it was August, the summer-autumn month, the fruitful sunny hybrid, the beautiful link between two beautiful seasons, so that you cannot tell to which it belongs, like Hesperus between the night and the morning.

Another gorgeous sky, all bronze deepening into blood, with a wild windy look, and the slightest, thinnest, most delicate-seeming new moon, violet-coloured, all but capsized on the red sea around. Slenderest of things, how canst thou swim through the coming tempest? was the question suggested. But her exquisite ethereal beauty is immortal. God holds that fine bow for ever in His hand. Going to the south of the valley, I had a beautiful prospect. The sun had just set beyond the northern mountains, but had left behind him rays of intensest light, and clouds which seemed live coals of his great conflagration scattered behind it as it sank away. Against the fading pomp in the western sky stood up the dark hills, shadowy yet serene in the twilight, with here and there some sullen streaks of snow unmelted in their clefts or on their summits. The lovely valley lay at the foot of the hill on which I stood, and the village was a little way beyond, with the hues of evening stealing over the scene, and the smoke of a hundred cottages rising up the still air, like incense from a hundred censers. Eastward ran the river in silence, its waves unheard from the distance, but felt to be sounding on their swift and eloquent way. In the far eastern sky arose a chain of clouds like volcanic mountains, red with the colours which the sun, set to other parts of the landscape, was still shedding on them, and one of which, split in twain, might have been one of the cloven

tongues of fire at Pentecost. All was still as death ; not the bleating of a sheep or barking of a dog or breathing of a breeze to break the silence—all was solemn to sublimity ; and the heart hardly dared a sigh or a beat to express the depth of its feelings. But all, too, after a little became inexpressibly gloomy. It seemed a picture of which the painter was long dead. It seemed a letter written in a beautiful cipher, the key to which was lost. It soothed, but it did not satisfy. It gave vague and magnificent thoughts about God, but no clear idea of Him. It expressed lavishly its own loveliness, but it only faintly and afar-off indicated its Creator's love.

The last two evenings have been divine, like oriental evenings, with a soft young moon revealing, not eclipsing the stars, and large white stripes of fleecy cloud, through which the constellations beamed with peculiar splendour in the dark-blue sky. What a pitiless thing the earth looks, with its paltry pursuits and passions, against the background of such a night-heaven ! How natural the cry, "O that we had wings like a dove, that we might fly away and be at rest !" There spake David in the name of all mankind, even of the most successful of those who bustle their short hour, and gain their little laurels, on this poor stage. Just two things in this world worth a rush ; first, the sincere love and pursuit of knowledge and truth for

their own sake ; and secondly, religion as expressed not in vague devotion or in dogmatic opinion, but in submission to, and reverence for God, and doing good to our fellow-men. Most else is leather and prunella ; or worse, vanity and vexation of spirit ; or worse still, selfishness and falsehood.

“How beautiful upon the mountains” the snow in its softness and silence ! What a divine disguise of nature it is ! How the loveliness in it, aided by sunlight or moonlight, contends with, and triumphs over, its dreary and repulsive aspect, and makes it often a most poetical thing !

Never beheld a lovelier afternoon, a more superb sunset, or a more lustrous night than last. First, slips of sunshine were seen resting on, and reddening favourite spots among the moors, or on the sides of the loftier hills. How intensely did these selected spots burn as in a furnace ! By and by the vapours began to roll up, and to surround, in a thousand fairy shapes, the chariot of the sinking sun. Here swam clouds like fishes, there towered up clouds like fortresses, there a cloud assumed the form of a large convoluted shell, and there again you saw clouds like huge unearthly heads frowning from the sky. Every shape was different, and the only unity among them was colour ; all seemed on fire, and you could imagine them “tormented in that flame”

as they rapidly shifted their position, and fluctuated as if writhing to and fro. And under that tumultuous glory the hues of autumn seemed to return and to rest on the sere leaves of the woodlands and the dry stubble of the plain ; and when the sunset was passed away there arose almost simultaneously in the east, as if to take their turn in, and add their share to, the splendours of the night, the round full moon, like a buckler of silver, and the evening star, like a boss of shivering gold ; while in every part of the sky floated fleecy or gauzy clouds, like the robes of angels ! Surely, I thought, if there be death on earth—and such death too !—there is life and immortality in heaven. Surely the souls privileged to see and enjoy such beauty can never die, and surely, if an earthly sky be so unspeakably lovely, how beautiful exceedingly must be that of the celestial country !

There is teaching even in the melancholy of Nature, specially in that of Autumn. What good there must be in misery, that sort of it at least which gives such deep autumnal delight as breathes in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind"—

"O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,

What if my leaves are falling like its own,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?"

The joy of grief, the beauty of decay, the glory of tears, the sublimity of sorrow, the grandeur of self-sacrifice, the very godhood of grief, are suggestive thoughts, and seem to justify the existence of an eternity not of penal suffering but of some form or other of sadness—"majestic pains," as Wordsworth has it. In this world, at least, I believe that sorrow shall never cease, although to a large extent it may be modified, so as to verify the words, "God shall wipe away all tears from all faces." In an entirely deathless and tearless world, the joy of harvest, one of the deepest on earth, could not be felt, nor many similar pleasures nor griefs sublimer far than joy.

NATURE AND SCIENCE.

Have been reading proceedings of British Association. Yestreen was a lovely autumn eve, with round yellow moon all but full, the sky clear; Arcturus and the Great Bear in all their glory; Jove in the zenith beautiful and large, and a keen cool whisper of harvest wind speaking of the yellow fields it had been rustling into poetic song over a thousand leagues of moonlit landscape! What after all do these *savants* know of Nature more than my soul is telling me through these divine symbols,

or what they reveal to the soul of any man of sensibility? Less than nothing. This emotion now in my heart is the true rendering of Nature's meaning. It is a joy the world cannot give nor take away; which science cannot give nor take away. Science no doubt can find food for poetry as the jackal for the lion, but its devotees are not necessarily poets themselves; and in furnishing materials for poetry, they no more know what they do than the bees hoarding honey anticipate what children are to be made happy by their sweet stores. In the speeches of the meeting I have not read a word that revealed in any speaker poetical genius; but how much of the poetry in essence, the poetry in fact and existence, was brought unintentionally to light. There was in all the proceedings fuel for the divine fire provided, but the fire itself was not there—fuel too for Philosophy rather than Philosophy itself.

ON DREAMS.

Thought, on rising to-day, what a soothing reflection that there is delight in dreams, piercing into that death-like night of the soul which comes over us in sleep. May there, must there, not be delight in death too, and, as Milton has it, "riches in hell"? I do not believe that there is such a

thing as absolute, unredeemed, and hopeless misery in any part of God's Universe; perhaps I should add, among intelligent and moral beings.

Dreams, however, were not always my friends, although they were objects of my constant study in certain moods. How tantalising it is to awake from a beautiful dream probably at its intensest moment of delight, and to find nothing but agony! How provoking to forget a delightful dream on which I had determined to chew the cud for a while ere rising! and how horrible a succession of evil dreams to dip in and out and in again—an inky ocean of misery, till, so permanent was the dark impression, when morning came it seemed to have come too late, and to bring no relief upon its wings!

A chaos of dreams. In one of them met with an old friend, and was blest in conversation with him, too much so, for "Morn brought back my Night." These old glows of feeling are delicious but dangerous, and tend to disgust us with present realities. Yet at an age when romance, if not fled, is usually on the wing to flee, the memory of it, assuming the shape of a dream, may be permitted, since it so seldom comes.

"Rarely, rarely comest thou, Spirit of Delight!"

Yet sometimes at night youthful feelings, tastes,

odours even, sensations and emotions of all kinds, return with astonishing vividness, coming whence and how we know not. In an affecting passage in "The Abbot," the Monk Ambrose (Edward Glendinning) speaks of old feelings belonging to a happier period of life, including his ungratified love for Mary Avenel, coming back upon him in the silent watches.

"We rest, a dream has power to poison sleep,"—

to poison or to bless with pure, exquisite, but short-lived, joy.

"Reunion of friends hereafter," says one, "is a doctrine that has no foundation in Scripture, and but one evidence anywhere—its own delightfulness." What an intense pleasure to meet with our boyish friends and loves, our companions in study, our departed parents, brothers and sisters, some of them dead ere we were born! How I would like to meet them in happiness, or to meet my favourite authors—Scott, Burke, Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge, Byron even and Hazlitt, Shakespeare too and Bunyan! Hall's sermon on the subject is very fine, but not finer than Cicero's words in the close of "De Senectute," beginning with "*O praeclarum diem!*" I think the fear of death, if not too abject, and the hope of immortality, if not too pronounced, dogmatic, and formal, the two

grandest things in man. They dignify life, they redeem it from bestial existence, and add to it solemnity and spirituality. Even the glimmer of this existing in the lowest Bushman, half mud, half man, makes him as really a son of God as the Miltons, Shakespeares, and Newtons of the race.

ON PAUSES.

I felt always a deep impression of the value and beauty of *Pauses*—the long pause in music, borrowing power from the notes before, and sending it on with interest to those which are to follow; the pause in nature called Winter, when all her energies are husbanded for the labours and triumphs of the Spring; the pause in the sky called Night, with its absent sun, silenced earth, and sentinel stars; the pause in day called Noon, with its slumbrous ripeness; the pause in society called Peace, as yet (may it not for ever be?) the mere stillness which precedes the storm of war; the pause in the week called the Sabbath-day; and the sublime pause of Death, interposed so beautifully and artistically between the melodies of life and immortality. But besides all these, and scarce less interesting than any of them, is the pause that often occurs in an

active or anxious and unhappy life—a pause in which the mind throughout all its powers and regions lies at rest, hearing the tumult and remaining still, peacefully pondering the past, and looking to the present and the future, as from some calm and lofty summit. Middle life should always bring some such pause along with it. Chalmers wished for what he did not obtain—a Sabbatical period between sixty and seventy; but perhaps this is too late for some, who might wish it rather between forty-five and fifty-five, and that it should be simply a folding up of wings, ere yet a feather is tarnished in colour or torn away by time; while others, remembering how much Chaucer, Cervantes, who wrote “Don Quixote” when nearly seventy, Michael Angelo, and Burke, accomplished in that later decade, and some even afterwards, might think it five years too early.

ON THE TRANSMIGRATION OF THE SOUL.

One day a little ugly black bug-like creature dropped, I suppose from the ceiling, upon my page. After blowing it away, strange reflections passed through my mind—What the use of such a loathsome little thing? It does not seem, like bugs or

other unclean vermin, to serve to punish man. It has never been made for purposes of beauty. It seems a mere excrescence and abortion, and is yet matched by innumerable millions of similar miscreations, made as if in a "superfluity of naughtiness." And yet it is as really God's as the fairest butterfly, or the most resplendent humming-bird. What a strange doctrine that of Transmigration! What an instrument of torture it might be made! Imagine a heartless coxcomb turned into a spider, and conscious that he was so! What a hell for him! or would he, in the extremity of his conceit, begin by and by to fancy himself a beauty, and plume himself on his numerous limbs, on his valorous deeds among the flies, and his finely woven webs? Such thoughts soon terrify more than they tickle. Dr. Arnold always shrank from contemplating the condition of the lower animals, and their relationship to man. Even vulgar minds feel this strongly. I remember an old man, somewhat in his dotage, saying to me, "I can see some use o' mice, but as to rottens (rats), I never could see the sense o' makin' them." But such questions puzzle all alike.

On another occasion I was much struck with a passage in Gibbon, where he speaks of an insect on the floor of St. Sophia displaying more of the

divine than that stately dome itself. I had seen that very day a hideous creeping thing under a wall, a new variety to me of hair-covered and many-footed worm; and a recollection of this rather staggered my belief in Gibbon's dictum. That wretched abortion equal to the "Iliad" or St. Peter's! No doubt it is in execution inimitable by man,—it belongs to a method of operation he can only wonder at, and never understand or emulate; but is not his design or purpose in those vast works of poetry and architecture greater and nobler far? Surely it is; and this is not to derogate from God, since it is the excess of divinity in man, above these reptiles, which enables him to write the noble poem or rear the lofty dome; and that is derived from God. Nor, perhaps, would the execution be so far inferior could man but solve the mystery of life. It is not so much the creature's mechanism as its life that drives the human artist to despair. Possibly, thought I, this problem of life may yet be solved, though not probably. Life in its unseen germ seems infinitely diffused, and for ever inscrutable in its cause, and inimitable in its effects. We must, meanwhile, prostrate ourselves before the wing of a fly in equal ignorance as before that wave of light we call the Milky Way. Probably, too, and this seems the real answer, these reptiles, worms, etc., are invaluable as parts of the great and growing

scale—weak singly, but essential to the whole. Divinity is to be sought for, it may be, not in the individual details but in the pervading *purpose*—a purpose not to be gathered from individualisms—and in the rounding (but is it ever to be rounded?) and everlastingly rising *result*.

ON HOPELESSNESS.

Hopelessness is worse than despair. Despair hurries to a crisis and a reaction. Hopelessness sits still on your shoulder—like that raven of Poe—and will neither depart nor darken deeper. “What is the use,” it would cry, “of this waste of splendour, this superfluity of glory, shining on worms?” Grant the bigot his utmost length and depth of Hell for punishing sin and redressing grievances, it only makes the matter worse; it only secures the eternal continuance, if not increase, of evil and iniquity; it changes redress into revenge, it creates sympathies for sin, it turns God’s triumph into an act of supreme selfishness, and makes human misery yield the largest share (so far as known) of his revenue of glory. But these thoughts are too dark and terrific to be dwelt on long. Good is, and, let me humbly hope, Good shall yet reign.

A comet was announced this year as coming near, if not absolutely to touch, the earth. Were that comet coming after all, what a scene! It *were* the Day of Judgment when, as the old prophets and apostles tell us, the heavens are to be on fire. Edgar Poe has a terrific picture of the fiery destruction of the earth. I imagine a comet would drive all men mad before it accomplished its mission. Conceive a "mad world, my masters,"—millions of howling and cursing demoniacs, some running naked through the streets, others leaping on the mountains, others drowning themselves in seas and rivers, others hiding in pits and mines from the sight of that terrific visitor, and the cry arising to the rocks and mountains, "Cover us, cover us, for the great day of His wrath is come! and who shall be able to stand?" What an uproar of maddened and tortured sin would arise from the cities of Paris, London, and the rest! God keep the earth from such a fearful "*Exeunt omnes.*"

Burns and Byron are said to have been most religious on a sunshiny day. Many again (as I do) have found themselves most disposed to piety on the cloudy and dark day about the close of July or beginning of August—a day without rain or thunder, and with bits of blue sky insinuating themselves through the cloud-masses. Then they

would remember Wordsworth's lines, where he speaks of the world as being

“a pensive but a happy place ;”

and find their best heaven in the Indian idea of it (with a variation)—

“Where everlasting autumn lies
On yellow woods and sunny skies.”

Intense gloom, I always found, had its silver lining. Think of the sheen of the raven's wing, the beauty of black Scotch pines, and so forth. And it is the same with the darker conditions of the mind. They rouse the faculties to the utmost, and teem with savage satisfactions. Byron had never more joy, and yet was never more miserable, than when spurned *communi consensu*—freely translated “by one unanimous kick”—from his country and stranded on Switzerland and Italy. He never knew the resources of his mind before. His loss, at all events, was our gain. Did not that kick give us “Cain” and “Don Juan”? What a burning sense of injury there must be in the hearts of the Pandemonians! Bruise happiness much and it yields misery. Bruise misery enough and it yields delight. There are no periods of life men so often remember, and even sigh for at times to return, as those in which misery has stung them *upwards*.

ON LIBRARIES.

How still and peaceful is a library! It seems quiet as the grave, tranquil as heaven, a cool collection of the thoughts of the men of all times. And yet, approach and open the pages, and you find them full of dissensions and disputes, alive with abuse and detraction—a huge, many-volumed satire upon man, written by himself. How damping and dwindling have often been my feelings in a large library! I have walked in the library of the British Museum with the most depressing sense of littleness and inferiority. “Here are whole worlds of literature which are strange to me, and will ever remain so—innumerable wise and learned volumes on these tall shelves I never read, never heard of, never shall read or hear of.” I thought so and sighed, till the prospect of a future life revived me. There are other spheres where, if found worthy, we shall move swiftly, and more easily reach a far larger and higher knowledge than all those volumes contain—where we shall look the Sun of Truth in the face, and prey, like the eagle, on his glory—where intuition shall do the difficult work of study, and where, as has been said of prayer,

“To ask is have, to seek is find,
To knock is open wide.”

What a broad thing is a library—all shades of opinion reflected on its catholic bosom, as the sunbeams and shadows of a summer's day upon the ample mirror of a lake. Jean Paul, I find in his *Memoirs*, was always melancholy in a large library, because it reminded him of his ignorance.

ST. PAUL'S AND WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

I first saw London in autumn; and the September light, though it shone on silent and almost deserted suburbs, seemed a fitting mantle for the dome of St. Paul's, and shed a sweet, sad glory upon Westminster Abbey, in keeping with its hallowed associations and divine decay. It was *the* spot in London of all others where I delighted to be—in the society of the dead. What companions above most companions I found *them* to be! Never unequal in spirits or morose in temper; always instructive, although always silent; so lowly, yet so loveable; who talked to me, and to whom I talked, through a finer medium than that of sound and speech. This is true of all the dead, from those of the common city sepulchre to those of the churchyard among the mountains, with that stillness within stillness, making you aware of a silence

beyond that of the silent hills, where the

“Rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.”

But here I had all the selected tenants of the tomb, the upper seats in the congregation, the choice extracts from the vast volume of the dead ! What, indeed, I thought, does this great Abbey contain but dust ? still, it is dust that once was fire and light and power and music—that spoke, and nations listened—that prayed, and God himself was moved ! If it be true that even in our ashes live our former fires, what a great silent furnace must these walls contain !

Westminster Abbey, I have often thought, is not so much a temple to the honour of the dead as a monument of the power and the weakness of death—his power to kill the bodies, his impotence to slay the souls, the minds, or the memory of those who repose there. Yet what a silent, smokeless sacrifice to death arises everlastingly from all its pinnacles and all its graves ! In another view, it may be regarded as a sublime but imperfect history of England, recording in strong, stony handwriting the names and deeds which that country has thought most worthy of preservation. Never weary was I of walking by the side of this noble company, lying each one in glory in his own house.

ON HEIGHTS AND DEPTHS—THE TELESCOPE AND
THE MICROSCOPE.

How strange and awful the distances between stars! "The silence of these infinite spaces," says Pascal, "affrights me." And coming down from such lofty and bewildering heights, we are met by depths as bewildering and strange. The microscope reveals another most singular and most stupendous universe lying unseen and unsuspected below our feet. Not only does it make every hair a tether, the wing of a butterfly a little world, and the cheek of a fair lady as rough as a hearth-broom, but it shows us an entirely new species of beings—*animal-culæ* of ten thousand varieties lurking in wood and water, in forest and in fen, all elaborately and even delicately formed, and all living, moving, and having their being in their small spheres with as much vivacity and joy as the larger children of nature, loving like men, holding their tiny festivals like men too, and sometimes, as men will do, fighting with one another, so that there is a "Waterloo in every water-drop," and the enormous contests of the American struggle are rehearsed or mimicked in every marshy puddle and every bit of decaying animal matter. So far, as it seems to me, from the microscope adding to man's pride by showing

innumerable races beneath him, it rather tends to humble him by showing that that these creatures are as finely formed and carefully tended by Providence, and are probably much happier than he.

Was looking over and showing to M.—a young girl of fourteen—the plates in Nichol's "Architecture of the Heavens." Enjoyed the wonder and delight with which she saw those marvellous firmaments, some of which, she said, resembled a "*mity cheese*." Yes, each mite a sun! That in Hercules, for instance, what a splendid agglomeration of stars crowding in upon the centre, till they become individually invisible in the thick blaze of glory! Made her, at another time, conceive of a firmament by pointing to a gas-lustre and supposing every particle of it a sun.

What does a fly, buzzing in the ear of one of General Grant's 60,000 men marching to encounter Lee, know of the whitherwards of that mass of fierce manhood rushing to meet the brave and shouting South? Just as much does any human being know of the purposes of those whirling suns and planets aloft there in the ether, or indeed of the earth itself.

ON DEATHBEDS.

Painful to witness deathbeds, to sit beside the bed of humanity melting away into—what? Voyaging out of sight—ah, whither? To see what seems a process of annihilation going on before your eyes—the soul vanishing with the last sigh, even as a wind toward evening is spent and sougns away. But then we remember that breath now departing is the breath of God—was never dead, can never die. The wind exhausts itself, but the air does not. What is it but, as Wordsworth has it,

“That man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return;
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn?”

Some years ago I saw a person dying in a very remarkable state of mind, and who had had rather a peculiar career—one naturally of strong understanding, in respectable circumstances, but who had led, on the whole, a sensual life, with frequent spasms, however, of remorse, and who could think of nothing, when dying, except the one awful thought which became a possession, How could ever a God, good, wise, and powerful, have permitted evil and misery to exist and remain for ever in the universe? This doubt damped devotion, dried the tears of repent-

ance, and the cloud, which the ministers called in vainly sought to dispel, continued till death. I believe that if such a thought fastens itself on a mind, as it did on Foster's, it is a serpent of Laocoon. Naught but death can unfix its grasp, and in minds like Byron's it stirs the defiance of hell.

FROST THE MOST ATHEISTIC OF ELEMENTS.

What gloom cold, and especially hoar-frost, often brings to me! It chills imagination, deadens pleasure, freezes affection, casts a shroud over the universe and its prospects, of which it gives the darkest prognostications. Frost is the most atheistic of elements, at least it sometimes seems so to me. Where, one asks in frost-bit moods, in this wide creation is there any spot of real rest, any island of peace? Echo answers, Where? Thank God, after all, for the grave, the *Ultima Thule* of man, where, if there be nothing else, there is at least repose—

“The long, long silence, and the wormy shroud,
And the Amen carved on the lonely tomb.”

They say there is a comet coming in August to burn us up. But so there was several years ago. It does not very much matter. The earth was seldom in a queerer state than now, thoroughly perplexed on every high subject, yet still stumbling

on. "Things will aye be some way," but were the comet coming they would be no way. What an age of talking big, and investigating deep, and splitting hairs continually, and yet knowing little—if there be a God or not, a future state or not; if the Bible be God's Word or not; whether the world will last a single day or for ever.

"Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest son,
All that we know is, nothing can be known."

And yet, through this world of real, profound, and universal darkness, uncertainty and confusion, stalk on the dogmatists on their eternal stilts; and they are certain of everything; and they are listened to by millions of dupes because they doubt of nothing, and are called prophets and sages, and we know not what; but while they chatter and fulminate, God is silent, and truth is very slowly making its way among men.

THE SADNESS OF GREAT POETS.

Mary Wollstonecraft was an unhappy woman; and so are too many of her kindred. A writer says to-day: "Sadness is the mood of all great poets, from Plato and Job to Tennyson." Why? Because they are just mammoth-men, and most men who think and feel deeply are sad at heart. Nothing

will entirely or permanently cheer them. There are, of course, men who are constitutionally buoyant, and many who are stupidly and insensibly peaceful. Yet there is much true delight in this world, because there is much good and more false, because man is wilful and powerful, and is determined that it shall be so.

Amused and annoyed both, while reading certain writers, chiefly of the Scotch materialistic school, who, whenever they come to a gloomy thought in a writer, cry out, "That's bile! we prescribe a blue pill"—a hopeless expression of feeling, and bawl out, "Blood must be let, or bark at least swallowed"—a doubt-hunter, "Too little exercise,"—"A melancholy reminiscence of the past," "The wet sheet decidedly," and so forth. No doubt there is something in this, but many of the most unhappy speculators and thinkers have been healthy and eupeptic men. What a shallow thing human nature, if the great cure for all its maladies, mental, spiritual, and physical, be a dose of medicine!

ON DOUBT.

— writes me to-day anent Doubt. He owns himself, so far, a doubter, but thinks that when men doubt they should preserve a mournful silence,

and treat it generally as the result of ignorance. It is true, to be sure, that to express prematurely either doubt or conviction is wrong. But just as when faith has come to a certain degree of strength it will and must speak out, so with doubt. It depends too, greatly, upon the motive. If one utters his doubt merely to have the miserable pleasure of involving others in its vortex, like a drowning man plucking in another, or a devil seeking to have company in hell, he deserves punishment, and there is none more terrible than to receive the thanks of those whom he has thus dragged after him, ere they begin their "fierce pains to feel." But a doubter may express his doubt in order to seek the resolution of it, or to stimulate the inquiry of others, or because the doubt has, like a diver, risen of necessity to the surface, and must be breathed or die, or because it seems to him a certainty. On the other hand, how often is a shallow faith prematurely protruded, and the words, "I have believed, and therefore have I spoken," are used by those who have never really pondered or weighed the grounds of their belief, and who yet seek to circulate their half-born and half-blind credence or credulity—call it not intelligent faith. Let such, too, keep silence.

And yet, in another view, even this clamant and silly credence is better than that crushing in of thought within the breast, that hiding of the bird

in the bosom till her wings flutter into agony, that wrapping up, like the Spartan boy of old, of the fox under the mantle till he devour the entrails, which is the misery of many—of many I say, not of all ; for I fear there are others who live in the element of doubt very comfortably ; nay, thrive in it, like salamanders in a furnace. Certainty on many points is perhaps not possible nor desirable at present ; in the twilight only cats or maniacs can see clearly ; and if ever there was a twilight and transition period, it is now. The difference of opinion about it is mainly this—if it be, as many good people fear, the *evening* twilight leading down to night, or the *morning* twilight leading up to a new day. “Thou, Eternal Providence”—I quote the grand words of Jean Paul again—“shalt cause the day to dawn !” Cordially do I cry, Amen.

Sometimes I seem to hear the Angel of the Gospel retiring from the earth, and am reminded of the words of the poet :—

“Something divine and dim
Seems going by one’s ear,
Like parting wings of Cherubim,
Which say, We’ve finished here !”

But let me trust that although one angel be departing, there are others on the wing for their journey hither. Meanwhile the times are portentous, big with change, and since the political

air at present (1862), at least in Britain, is lulled, the revolutionary spirit is finding its vent in Religion. Revival, as was again and again predicted, has only quickened and irritated, not satisfied the religious sentiment, which is still crying, "Give, Give," and can get nothing better than Colenso and his antagonists. Truth is a mighty and subtle element, piercing all questions, blind-seeming as heat, yet all-seeing as light, and it must one day be the only atmosphere of thinking minds. Yet to dwell in the love of truth is to dwell in truth—the vestibule and the temple are one. The love of truth¹ is in one sense more valuable than truth, because it is a moral quality—an individual excellence. Yet how rarely is it to be met with! Cuvier told Dr. Knox that he had only met *four* who possessed it among his innumerable students. When you talk to some of being consumed by the love of truth, the answer is a laugh. And yet we see, every day, persons consumed by love of man, by benevolence, and by other and lower feelings, and why not some by the love of truth? If ever man was, it was Arnold; and I think two or three of his school, such as Jowett and Colenso and perhaps Dean Stanley, have taken after him in this.

¹ See Lessing.

THE SUPERSTITIOUS ELEMENT IN OUR RELIGION.

Superstitious as I myself am, constitutionally and through early training, I have nevertheless been astonished at the extent to which Superstition is mingled with Religion in many good people's minds. Dreams are more cherished by some of them than the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Noises, heard at night, of an unaccountable kind, have more effect than the thunders of Sinai. I sometimes feel apprehensive, lest the spiritual warfares of the world resolve themselves into a controversy between Superstition and Common-sense. Should it come to such a pass, I for one cry "Common-sense *versus* Superstition!" Spirit-rapping has cured me of belief in Ghost-seeing, and Revivalism would of a canting and sensuous Evangelicalism, had I ever inclined to it. We must have a manly, progressive, and intellectual religion for an intellectual period. The present forms and fashions of Evangelicalism are not pleasing to me; because, first, in the lower minds, they induce or conserve intellectual weakness and bigotry, and because, in the higher, they sometimes tend, I fear, to dishonesty and *suppressio veri*, or to what is more intolerable still, a compound of cant and Jesuitism—sincere cant and insincere Jesuitism,

which seems to me a most melancholy combination. Part of our common faith is at present little else than organised and disguised superstition, and not a few of our flaming religionists are nearly, it may be feared, Papists in essence and heart. Oh for the Protestantism that should protest against itself in its present meagre shape, instead of mistaking the motions of its own skeleton and quaking form for the effects of the Divine presence and power !

Was struck when in London by a remark made by a very intelligent man, about the preaching of a noted north country *terrorist*, that it seemed to him little better than common cursing and swearing. Have often had nearly the same impression. One would think that these Divines had gone so far toward, and become so familiar with, that "other place," as to have learned its very language in its full vocabulary of horror. Certainly, however, no one could ever apply to them the fine image of Keats, used about Mercury (the mythological conductor of the dead to the Shades), and which Charles Lamb so much admired, "The Star of Lethe," representing beautifully the periodic return to these remote and shadowy climes of that bright and winged Deity ! Of Jonathan Edwards and others of that school we may say, what Johnson in Milton's own words says of Milton, that

"Hell grows darker at his frown." They add a gloomier gloss to the outer Darkness, and seek to barb the sting of the undying Worm. How different from the spirit of Jesus !

REPUTED ATHEISTS NOT TO BE CHARACTERISED
AS FOOLS.

Some writers call such Atheists, or reputed Atheists, as Lucretius, Spinoza, and Shelley, fools. The expression is unjustifiable. Their theory or idea of the Divine might be false, but their feeling of the Divine was true and ardent. They may be said to have drowned God in matter, as Cleopatra dissolved her pearl in wine, but the effect of this was to exalt, spiritualise, and deify Materialism. We admit that it is impossible to know God apart from His works ; they went a little further, and averred that it was impossible to conceive of God apart from them, or even for God to exist apart from them, and the difference of the two theories is perhaps not so great as it seems. Something Divine, Real, Miraculous, Eternal, Immense, Awful, and, though Inscrutable, Lovely, they admitted ; we personify that something into God.

ON RATIONALISM, RITUALISM, AND PURE RELIGION.

I read yesterday a pamphlet entitled "Rationalism, Ritualism, and Pure Religion" with interest and considerable admiration, both of its ability and spirit. I can see, however, that its amiable and able author is not the man to grapple with the scepticism of this age. He has not sufficient sympathy with it; he has not lived long enough in its atmosphere; he has not visited its profoundest depths, nor tossed on its wildest billows. Intellectually and logically he may understand it, but sympathetically and experimentally he does not. Even intellectually he does not look at it in a sufficiently broad light.

The true view of doubt seems to be that of a giant growth, inevitable to our present state of progress. The advance of science in its myriad departments, the creation of sciences entirely new, the deepening and enlarging path of historical research, the increase of a severe and minute Scripture criticism, the increasing perplexity, so strangely co-existing with the growing perfectionment of our metaphysical inquiries, which now seem to analyse everything to its essential elements, and again, to cover all things with a deeper veil of darkness, and which threaten, as the result of some of their specu-

lations, to render God utterly inconceivable, and religion impossible; these facts are combining, along with the restless spirit and craving for novelty so characteristic of the age, to shed a tumult of conflicting lights and shadows upon both revealed and natural religion which is quite terrific. Many of the difficulties in Scripture are becoming greater, the longer they are looked at, and the more they are defended. Still yawns the gulf between the first two chapters of Genesis and the discoveries of Geology; a "Serbonian Bog" into which myriads of treatises and theories of reconciliation have gone down and disappeared for ever. Still rolls on the flood, and on it the ark of Noah in its unintelligible, and to many, incredible mystery. Still the sun shines over Gibeon, a standing problem, glaring down on Joshua and on us from the sky. And still there are the numerous difficulties about the canon, the chronology, the ethnology, the numerals, the slaughter of the Canaanites and the Midianites, the origin of the Pentateuch, the date and fulfilment of Daniel and the other Prophets, about the genealogies, the miracles, the resurrection of Christ, and the genesis of the Gospels, to which of late Colenso and others have added, not so much in quantity as in clearness of statement and strength of demonstration. And while these dark clouds are pressing every day more closely around

theology, and mixing with others of a still more fearful hue, such as the unsolved questions about the atonement, the eternal punishment of the wicked, the apparent failure of our religion in the world, and so forth, Natural Religion is pressed too by its old shadows, and threatened daily by the advent of new ones. Creation, in the common sense, is denied; pantheism is strongly defended; the origin of evil is reproduced as an element of unfathomable obscurity to thicken the medley of doubt, and to deepen the difficulty connected with the existence of a personal God; and the development of species and evolution are favourite ideas. More melancholy to me than all such doubts and difficulties is the manner in which, on the whole, they have been met by our Christian apologists, so far as I have read their replies. There has been displayed in them extremely little apprehension of that awful aboriginal darkness whence, as from an abyss, so many doubts will arise, like the armed head in Macbeth; of the extreme limitation of our knowledge, even after Nature and the Bible have told us the most; of the powerlessness of our faculties in realising truth even after it has been authoritatively delivered to us; and of the sad ultimatum to the prospects of the human family which the very mildest of orthodox theories imply. There has been too much of dogmatism and angry

animus on the part of the apologists; a spirit, I fear, often either springing from the violence of the effort to suppress doubt in their own minds, or from ignorance of the real tendencies of thought and feeling in the present age. The cry has been incessant that these doubts are none of them new; they have all been solved long ago; but if there are still many able and candid minds unsatisfied by the former explanations, can these have been altogether conclusive? If difficulties have been thoroughly killed and drowned, why will they so obstinately persist in still rising to, and swimming on the surface? Besides, these doubts, even when not new in substance, are often new in form, and supported by new evidence. No concession of much consequence will most of our Christian defenders make; no admission, or as little as possible, of difficulties in their own system; little sympathy with the perplexity of honest inquirers, many of whom are as anxious to be good Christians as others; much reckless imputation of bad motives and of actual falsehood, as when a writer in a certain magazine, without any evidence, throws suspicions on Colenso's veracity in his statement that some of his doubts were suggested by the Zulus. Intellectually feeble too have been many of the replies to the "Essays and Reviews," such as M.'s papers in the "Aids to Faith." And then, on the other hand, we have such moun-

tains as — obstinately persisting in bringing forth mice, in evading the difficulties of enemies, and in disappointing the hopes of friends.

There are various classes connected with the movement. I may perhaps range them under the following heads with considerable accuracy:— There are first the men of the *Record*, clinging with pertinacity to every plank of their floating formula, and throwing out uncharitable abuse, not only against professed doubters, but against all men of independent thought. Such men can only in one way be useful. There are many weak Christians who would be the worse for coming into contact with modern speculation. Such men the *Record* and the rest defend from its approaches, in much the same spirit as an angry hen defends her chickens by pecking and screaming, and puffing out her wings, and abortive attempts to fly. But on the highly intelligent and ardent lovers of truth, on those on whose sides the dart of doubt is deeply fixed, and who are bleeding well-nigh unto death, as well as in the large class who feel a deep sympathy with their struggling brethren, such tirades do an immense deal of evil. They often disgust them entirely with a religion which has thus been formally divorced from reason and from charity too. They seem to advocate suppression and stagnation of thought as duties, and point to no remedy

but the old ostrich one of hiding our heads in a bush. They bring Christianity into angry collision with science, literature, and philosophy, by asserting in a crude and one-sided form, its supreme authority. They can only, I repeat, guard the weak, and that very imperfectly; but of what consequence is this compared to the repellent and mischievous influence they exert upon the strong!

There is another class who take occasion gladly to push doubt to difficulty, to throw away both helve and hatchet, to give up the pearl because the casket is shivering, to ignore the spirit because the body is waxing weak and old. Such have hailed Colenso and the others because they have helped them forward a few steps on a path they were willing and had already begun to travel; and have added the weight of these new doubts to the momentum of their own foregone conclusions.

There is another, and a very interesting class, whose case demands the most careful and kindly treatment—Christians, namely, who cannot be called weak, but who are simple, and their simplicity is their strength; and who have been compelled by the uncertain times to tremble for the Ark of God, and to say within themselves, “We trusted that it should have been He who should redeem Israel.” Such persons are made often very wretched by what they read or hear of the speculations of the

day, and sometimes betray this misery by the bitterness of their language against the speculators. Yet, as I have narrowly watched, I have seen them by and by coming to what I considered was for them the proper state of mind. Staggered by special difficulties, and not always satisfied with the replies to these, which nevertheless they quoted, they yet with a resolute loyalty threw themselves back now upon their general persuasion of that grand divine element that is in Christianity, in one or other of its forms ; now on what appeared to them some one decisive argument, such as the fate of the Jews ; and now on their personal experience, saying with Paul, " We know in whom we have believed, and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him until that day." Such persons, and they are unquestionably among the salt of the earth, are seldom averse to, and often become eager advocates of, the speedy and personal appearance of Christ, a doctrine which the fact that they believe it does not indeed render more probable, but invests with a new interest, and shows that there is in it still some spiritual savour and practical life.

ON PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT.

Garbett of Oxford has been lecturing on Progressive Religious Thought. It does not seem to have been a very satisfactory or a very fair discussion of the subject. He says that modern thought is unscientific, because, while science seeks only to discover, it seeks to create. Now, while I don't hold in every point by the Maurician School, I think that such language tends to misrepresent their purpose. To create means to bring something out of nothing, but they rather seek to extract from an old system its elements of vitality and to form them into a new. This is a strictly scientific and thoroughly legitimate purpose, whether they have accomplished it or not. Garbett deplors the fact that the world is ceasing to believe in an infallible Bible. But what does this amount to? Just this, that the world is becoming aware of the difficulties connected with verbal inspiration, and is not disposed to slur them over under the shallow explanations of the past. The letter of the word killeth, and must in its turn be wounded, if not slain; but the spirit, life, morality, principles, and leading facts in it are imperishable, and will continue to constitute as of old time the great elements of our moral and spiritual education. I do not believe that Colenso or

the Essayists have the slightest personal quarrel with the Bible, although they have grave doubts as to whether certain parts at present included in it belong to the revealed Word of God.

Yet the Bible at present exhibits a curious spectacle, clutched at and torn to pieces by so many hands ; here the critic wresting whole handfuls out of its midst and scattering them to the winds ; there others in vehement sectarian love violently securing passages and texts to suit their own special dogmas ; and there a third class excerpting its literary beauties along with its moral precepts, and leaving all the rest to the fate which, as they deem, impends over it, of fading like a leaf. How consoling to remember that there are nevertheless in it principles of inextinguishable life, and passages of immortal value. Perhaps, too, in now appearing less divine than it did, it is becoming more human ; if less the book of Heaven, more that of the earth, the faithful reflector and guide of man's moral progress, and holding the relation to all later spiritual masterpieces which the "Principia" does to later mathematical treatises. "If Newton," says Johnson, "had lived in ancient Greece, they would have adored him as a divinity." And perhaps most originators of great truths are in certain ages sure of apotheosis. But was not Moses as mighty and more like himself on the plain, dashing now the

tables and now the calf to pieces, than when shrouded in darkness and engaged in mystic communion on the summit? Because in the course of ages men must come down from the pinnacles of the past, stand nearer our own level, and appear to be of like passions with ourselves, they do not lose but gain in power; and the disenchantment is in reality more divine than the grand illusion produced by distance and elevation.

Some, I see, are calling at present for a General Council—a proposal which points to her that sitteth on the Seven Hills, as if (as Andrew Fairservice in “Rob Roy” has it) “ane werena eneugh for her auld muckle hinder end;” but they may stand long enough on the sand of the sea-shore and cry themselves hoarse, ere the broad-bottomed beast of a false unity will come up. Alarming as the aspect of the times is in reference to scepticism, etc., it is not the junction of two old effete semi-superstitions like the Eastern and Western Churches, no, nor the union of two or three petty Protestant sects in Scotland, that can be of much service. I can indeed conceive of a great Catholic Council of the more intelligent and liberal Christians of all denominations met to take up the whole Christian case, the Canon, Inspiration, etc., and prepared to concede and to sacrifice much; to admit nothing that was not fully proved; to revise or to throw away standards and books, even sacred books;

this were something worth while; but of course this will never be. The spirit of the age has started the problems of the age, and must work them out for itself. God indeed may and should be sought to aid us in this; but God will do so in His own way, and not in one we dictate to Him. It is probably His will that the things that can be shaken may be shaken still further, till the immoveable and immortal fruits alone remain. Some are hoping in another Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit. The Bishop of London has been talking of this. This seems very like the rant of revivalism, and reminds me of such men as M. S. and others boasting of that awakening in Ireland, as they call it, curing some clergymen of Arianism. I can conceive indeed a mind under deep spiritual impressions reconsidering the grounds of its belief with greater care, and changing its views; but that momentary emotion should be mistaken for the result of argument, or accepted as new evidence on a critical or intellectual question, seems absurd. We don't want emotion so much as we want truth, and surely truth should correct emotion, and not emotion truth.

There is a large class who regard the inquiry of the age as an evil sign, and as identical with the triumph of false doctrine. But the age must in its present stage of progress inquire, and it is inquiring upon all subjects. Tell it to be modest, to be

unprejudiced, to be all-sided in its inquiries if you please, but do not say : " Here is a field railed off from the rest, in which you must either not inquire, or at least come to no conclusions opposed to previous beliefs, else these must be condemned as errors." Whether is this Protestantism or " flat Popery " ? The progress of Thought is at present that of a glacier irresistible, in some measure destructive, but fraught with future blessings. How silly the man who should cry on a glacier to stop !

PRESENT THOUGHTS ON RESULTS OF RECENT
BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

In Scotland, especially under the pressure of formulas and the fear of popular opinion, the love of truth is often crushed, and the trampling down of a natural desire is sometimes confounded with humility. The Scotch thinker lets " I dare not " wait upon " I would." He walks under the grim shadow of his Confession as under a thunder-cloud, ever looking up for the lightning. Worse still are his solemn head-shakings and whispered condemnations of all aberrations of thought. Hence the comparatively tame and mindless cast of Scottish religious literature, in which, instead of the exquisite elegance and vigour of Hall ; the grave, bold

energy of Foster ; the reverent daring of Arnold ; and, in Robertson of Brighton, the mixture of profound thought and poetic beauty, you have only M'Cheyne's pious commonplace ; such pietistic and pretentious drivel as these books on "Heaven our Home," "Our Companions in Heaven;" Dr. Guthrie's eloquent but thoughtless pictorialisms ; Candlish's clever paradoxes ; Brown's lumbering though learned Commentaries ; and Cunningham's strong but belated apologies for the indefensible, and panegyrics on the dead and buried dogmas of the past. Indeed, Scotland has hardly produced any great religious thinker or writer, although it has produced eloquent preachers, nor can it, nor England to boot, show one religious thinker to be compared to the German Schleiermacher. Some men at present want a new and true theory of inspiration in the first place, construction to go before demolition. I want demolition first, and construction afterwards. Of course, if the demolisher work under some constructive idea, he will more effectually gain a negative purpose ; but without this he may do good. Luther and Colenso agree in this. Luther found the Bible all interlaced with apocryphal additions of the Papacy. Some of these he tore away, leaving the Canons comparatively clear. Colenso and his school of critics find that the elimination was not, and could not then be complete ; and they proceed, under the

light of a new age, to complete the same, whether always with success, I will not decide. Some may say that Luther was a positive believer, and had the constructive power; but the Lutheran Church, in its history, has not proved this, and now Germany, at least intellectual Germany, values Luther more as the reformer and liberator than as the theological architect. My present thought is, that many parts of Scripture are allegories or parables of spiritual truth; that others are so corrupted or transposed that we cannot now confirm their historical accuracy, or even get at their meaning; that the Bible, as a book of science or natural history, never aspired to any authority except that of recording the ideas of its age; that its historians of events were not free from inaccuracy, although on the whole honest men; but that the general spirit and scope of the book, and its moral and spiritual utterances, are divine. To this, probably, all sensible men will come by and by. It seems only a question of time.

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM.

And yet it cannot be denied that we are getting more deeply every day into religious symbolism.

Even as the elements at the Lord's Table represent the body and the blood of Christ, and these again the great principles involved in Christianity, so the facts and the quasi-facts, and some of the dogmas, are fast becoming symbols of certain great spiritual truths more than they were before. The Cross is the symbol of God's love and of the identification of Himself in its sufferings with humanity. The devil is the symbol of the energy and activity of that evil which is mysteriously bound up in man's history; *he* is the frightful frontispiece to the volume which records the triumphs of selfishness and sin, and the woes which uniformly succeed these hapless victories. The translation of Enoch symbolises the belated but precious success which follows persevering struggle in the good cause. The Transfiguration is the symbol of those lofty anticipations and sweet prelibations of victory which often cheer the hearts of brave and noble sufferers, and did cheer Christ's heart. The Flood; the destruction of the Cities of the Plain; the ten plagues of Egypt, are symbols of the dreadful consequences of national or world-wide guilt. We are beginning to value the principles more than the symbols. The Broad Church has it in its mission to hasten on this process, although it is desperately resisted by those who are for upholding these symbols as all literal and minutely accurate facts. It is the essence of

Popery to crush the principles under the symbols ; to bury them in the bells, and strangle them in the silken hangings of ceremonialism ; it is the effort of the new Protestantism to liberate them from these environments, some of which having become incredible, have become intolerable too, *i.e.* as in every point literal facts, although worthy of all acceptance as beautiful symbols, founded of course on a substratum of objective reality.

Christianity cannot get out of her present environments as she is. She must change, as in one of the transmigrations of "The Arabian Nights." She must become more of a spirit and less of a body, less of a crude mass and more of an essence.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT
QUESTIONED.

Have noticed of late, in the accounts of various travellers, that savages are now found in Australia, the heart of Africa, etc., who have no notion whatever of God or of a future life. The contrary used to be dogmatically asserted. It seems clear that children, if not taught to believe in God, would never, while remaining children, or perhaps even in

adult life, find it out. The true and large idea of a God must come either from direct revelation, or as the result of great refinement and exaltation of thought. There was not a bit of barbarism in Moses, or Job, or any of the great old proclaimers of Divinity. Apart from their inspiration, they were the inheritors of an old and high civilisation, where Theism in some form or other had prevailed for thousands of years. To children, and to most barbarians, unless they retain the truth from the remote past, the universe, I suspect, seems God rather than God's work; something so vast, superior to themselves, inscrutable, and exalted, as to be itself Divine. And to this conclusion of infancy the Materialist and Pantheist return, the one led by the fixity, universality, and omnipotence of natural laws, and the other by the metaphysical conception of the unity of substance underlying all phenomena, and both driven, they tell us, by the moral difficulty connected with the thought of a Personal God deliberately making a world that has been so miserable, and in fact so vile. It is impressive to remember that our early instincts reject with incredulity or loathing such doctrines as arbitrary election, eternal punishment, and God the author of evil. This, coming from young and innocent children, might almost be counted an oracular voice. Nor can you get them to care much about God till you show

Him incarnate in Christ. Wordsworth, speaking of his boyish days, says—

“My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky ;
So was it when I was a boy,” etc.

And so the young heart leaps up when it sees the rainbow of the covenant in its sky, and hears God in Christ saying, “Though I was angry with thee, yet mine anger is turned away.” It is these divine gushes of love, sympathy, and pity in the Scriptures that make them so dear to the heart of humanity ; and criticism never can lessen their value, though it may shake the foundation of many seeming facts and the authority of entire books. As to the difficulty mentioned above, we must just be dumb, saying, “Thou didst it, and art a Father still !” Better to have to do with an intelligent Will, if it be not that of an absolute demon, than with eyeless and irresponsible Necessity. Strange peculiarity in our constitution,—that we love, and cannot but love, a race that will never reward us, and worship a God we do not, and never shall comprehend. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” This does not, however, render the more amiable conceptions of God less desirable ; for these would secure in us a warmer affection, a more willing obedience, and a more reasonable service.

JUDAISM AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

Milman's "History of the Jews," dated as far back as 1829, is especially interesting at the present time. He takes a singularly dispassionate, and, on the whole, accurate and favourable view of the Judaical system. He evidently inclines to a modified Rationalism, but while not admitting the whole system to be divine, he does ample justice to Moses in his purpose and genius. He vindicates the extirpation of the Canaanites as that of a race of bloody, licentious, and barbarous idolaters; but what, alas! were many of the men who took the sword? Bloody?—think of the Midianite war with its seas of gore. Licentious!—think of Judah, Samson, David, Solomon. Barbarous!—think of Simeon and Levi, Jael, and the Levite with his concubine. Idolaters!—remember the Golden Calf. Milman remarks on the strange sinking down of a nomadic and military tribe into a peaceful and agricultural population, but does not notice that it was precisely this sinking down, although apparently foreseen by Moses, which checked the greatness of Israel; it was not till it returned, under David, to its warlike and predatory character, that it became, and that only for a season, a nation of considerable importance in the world. It was how-

ever impossible, without a perpetual miracle, for Israel, either as a peaceful or as a warlike nation, to have held its own against the vast empires of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome; and accordingly hold its own it did not, but fell before them all in succession, although its people, through their intense peculiarity and force of character, poetic genius, industry, passion for wealth, and the truth that was in their religion, kept themselves apart. The general view of Milman seems as correct as it is favourable. But he turns away from those marks of a composite, human, and late origin in the Pentateuch, which are certainly very numerous and startling. Macaulay approves of the truth of Warburton's theory, that the doctrine of a future life was not a part of the Jewish Revelation, but denies its originality. Now, unquestionably, the doctrine of Immortality was not protruded in the Jewish system, but it may have been implied. If we believe the book of Hebrews, it was often symbolised. The want of it reduces the Israelites to a nation of brutes, and renders the continued duration of their policy a most difficult problem, and their exodus from Egypt, where that doctrine was familiar, a retrogression in theology and intelligence instead of an advance. Possibly it was held as an esoteric doctrine, and not published openly lest it should lead, as it did with the Greeks and Romans, to

idolatry and superstition. Belief in it was certainly strengthened and popularised at the Captivity. Ewald thinks that the mind of the Jews contemplated chiefly the immortality of their race, and cared nothing for that of the individual. The nation as a whole believed so firmly in its everlasting future, that the individual paid the less regard to it for himself. As a strong man, in the midst of the triumphant whirl of life, and a multitude of remunerated labours, becomes easily contented with the present, and reflects neither on the terrors of death, nor the rewards of another life, so that ancient community, amidst its great new truths, and consequent inspirations of its victorious life, felt itself too pre-occupied by the present and the tasks of its immediate future to be conscious of any strong necessity to look much beyond. Jahveism was the opposite of the Egyptian religion, which, as may be often the case with an over-civilised and effeminate people, busied itself only too much with the things after death, and might be as justly called the religion of death, as Jahveism was of life. Ewald admits, however, that the early Hebrew faith extended to a future life; and hence the belief in Enoch's translation; and also that when Israel was falling into decrepitude and decay it began to suffer from the want of a faith in immortality which later ages however supplied, even before the coming of Christ.

The Bible has in it glorious inspirations, more glorious aspirations, poetry and eloquence, nature and feeling incomparable ; but its human elements are numerous, and greatly modify and lessen its unique character. Instead of being a simple book, as some people call it, it is the most composite of volumes, and its historical and other elements are very freely handled. To understand the Bible thoroughly we must understand the Jewish nation and mind, with its grandeur and its suppleness ; its Isaiahs and Jacobs ; its predominant imagination and passionate feeling, to which facts are in some measure subordinate ; its lust of power and wealth ; its dreams of national greatness, and the irritation produced by their deferred or denied accomplishment ; its noble monotheistic religion, pure code of morals, and lofty genius ; and its small and servile position, and the many crushing calamities by which these advantages were neutralised. After all this is seen and weighed, something, no doubt, very wonderful, but not quite so supernatural, remains. It is a circlet of fire, narrow as the top of Sinai, that we see on the brow of the Hebrew nation, not the broad crown of universal sovereignty.

The two main features of the age, theologically, at present seem, first, pulverisation of all sects and

creeds, and secondly, premature construction. We are begun to reconstruct before the pulverisation is complete. It is rebuilding a house torn down by the first squall of a tornado in the lucid interval preceding the second and more terrible storm. Such are all present attempts at union and consolidation of Churches, although individuals may to some extent reconstruct their own faith.

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS.

As mediators between the Church and Science there appeared some fifty or seventy years ago the Transcendentalists. Their mission seems ended, but the opposing parties are confronting each other as fiercely as ever. The Church is as boastful as before, its motto being infallibility and no surrender; and the Encyclopædiasts, instead of having disappeared, or being swallowed up in either of the other two parties, are as lively and sanguine as ever, having matured their former crude Lamarckian theories into the grand generalisation of Evolution. No doubt the Broad Church, connected too with a kind of eclectic philosophy, stands between them, but the screen is not very strong, except with a select class, which is comparatively small too, while the other hosts are powerful and numerous. It is implicit faith *versus* scientific verification. There

are weak points in both. This faith has no rational evidence, and says it needs none. Evolution has not yet attained to the proof of a complete induction. But they are the two extremes, and they seem determined to fight it out, each being on the whole united with itself, while between them the parties of Broad Church, Evangelicals, and Transcendentalists are split into fragments, and fighting fragments too. Carlyle did not foresee the rally of Encyclopædism, nor does he yet seem aware of its power, although he and Blackie, and Ruskin and Hutchison Stirling, assail it continually. Its weak point, I repeat, is that while laying so much stress on verification, it has only partially verified itself. Carlyle in his papers on Diderot, after speaking of the Encyclopædiasts as mastodons, fossils of an utterly extinct race, cries out at the close of his paper, quoting Goethe, for belief, and denounces unbelief. But many will ask him, What is your belief? and maintain that the Evolutionists have a far more definite creed than he or any of the intermediate and fluctuating parties. They will say too that the mysticism of Transcendentalism and of Religion are very much the same, and form a deceiving misty atmosphere, through which either party can easily glide into the other's quarters, and which makes a bond of shadowy connection between them, and a shelter for imposture and impostors of every kind. I sigh here, and have often sighed before, for some

other medium between the two, some reconciling process or principle.

In the midst of the Coliseum at Rome there is erected a simple cross. In some moods this might move me to melancholy. It might seem a combination in one view of two gigantic failures—the Coliseum of the Roman empire and the Cross of Christian enterprise, both looking up helpless and hopeless to the sky,—nay, might we not conceive the Coliseum looking down upon the Cross and saying, “Art thou too become weak as I? Is the earthquake which shook me down, beginning to tremble below thee too, though once reputed the Tree of Life, the leaves of which were for the healing of the nations?” Yet this would take too limited a view of the matter. The Cross may have lost its magical and miraculous charm; its circle of marvels and miracles may have shrivelled and contracted; but as a symbol of universal principles, God’s Fatherhood, Man’s brotherhood, Christ’s self-sacrifice, and that immortal hope which hovers over man’s march, the Cross is still powerful and cheering, and contrasts beautifully and significantly with the Coliseum, the spent emblem and sublime ruin of the reign of mere law and military force, and you think of Shelley’s words :

“The moon of Mahomet arose, and it shall set.
While blazoned as on Heaven’s immortal noon
The Cross leads generations on.”

THE FUTURE LIFE.

Tennyson has some striking lines on a future life. He says of virtue :—

“She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just ;
To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky,
Give her the wages of going on and not to die.”

Surely the last gasp of the wish for Immortality ! Why, work no doubt is a good thing, and everlasting work better than everlasting torment, but certainly unless work is better rewarded than here, more useful and more pleasurable, 'tis a beggarly Elysium the Laureate sets before us, a Cyclopean paradise fixed in the bowels of Etna, not on the summit of “the hills of God” where we thought we were to “summer high in bliss.” 'Tis, I repeat, a good *pis aller* or do-no-better, but not I trust the full truth on the subject.

Milton and Edward Irving agreed in expecting too much from the future of man, which they connected with the dream of a theocracy on earth. Few now of their order of mind expect that Man shall ever be God, or governed by God in person ; but believe that man will be mightily improved and bettered through intellectual, moral, and spiritual progress. Give God time, and the strong probability is that

He will make man and his world, not Divine, but incomparably better than they are, and in this, man too must and will be a fellow-worker with God. Apart from Pessimism and Millenarianism, such is the sober, calm, and decided hope of perhaps the wisest and best of men in the present day; and it seems a manly theory if by no means absolutely certain.

For Pessimism has a good deal in its favour. Culture, it will be said, has done its best on many persons, and even on some classes, if not nations of men; and yet they are little better or happier. But *first*, the culture has been often that of the intellect, or the taste solely, not of the affections or divine feelings; *secondly*, it has been cumbered and poisoned in its influences by an unsettled theology—were that in some measure reduced to order, and its limits ascertained, Culture would, when broadened, work with more certainty and effect; and *thirdly*, Culture is not general, and it must in individuals be counteracted by its non-existence in those by whom they are surrounded; and so in all classes and nations too. It has not, in the first place, secured its own full development; and, secondly, it has not had fair play and a fair development around it. Look to individuals. Byron will be quoted as a man of transcendent genius, and a wretch. But Byron had not even intellectual culture, far less

moral,—he was in proportion as uneducated as Burns. Goethe, no doubt, was a superb specimen of intellectual, but not of moral culture ; his affections were chilled early, and his morals were systematically what must be called loose. Carlyle is a man of warmth, genius, good morals, and wide knowledge, but of a bilious temperament, soured by long neglect, and early committed to a warfare with prevalent religious and other prejudices. How many less distinguished are known to have been by Culture strengthened and blest ! The upper classes are highly cultured, but their culture is often partial, and they do not share it with their inferiors ; it has therefore taught many of them pride—not that humility which it must by and by do.

THE TENDENCY TO SIMPLIFICATION AND SPIRITUALISATION IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION.

Striking words of Paul : “ Though I have known Christ after the flesh, henceforth know I him no more.” Whether Paul intended it or not, they may be applied to what is a general law in thought, both in Philosophy and Religion,—a tendency to simplification and spiritualisation. We go from infinite details to general principles ; from outward shows to inward powers ; from mythological persons in

the sun, winds, etc., to great silent laws, and from many laws to *one*. And so in Religion: we begin with ceremonies, observances, idols, figures, and forms, and we come by and by to severely simple worship, and to one God. In this process Christ Himself undergoes modification to man's view. At first He supplants and displaces all other men and mediators, prophets, priests, and kings, and His Person as Man is worshipped as Divine. But by and by men come to worship the God in Him, and then, in the words of Paul, "The Son is made subject unto God, and God is all in all." Not that the Son is supposed to be lost in God, but is, so to speak, transmuted or transfigured into, God. Even as the actual body of Christ became, we are told, after His resurrection, a spiritual body, passing through doors and windows, so the Spirit and Power of Jesus may, in Paul's thought, merge into the Divine Mind. The highest peak in a morning mountain range seems at first to belong to heaven, to be a star,—so brightly does it shine, so much is it a favourite of the sun; but soon other peaks become as bright, and at last the whole landscape is illuminated, and the sun is all in all. So may it be in the future; and all beings be felt to be Godlike, nay, God, when His influence has fully extended to all men. But would not this dethrone Christ? No! Is Mount Everest dethroned when all his brethren are illu-

minated? He is still the highest, and he got the radiance *first*. This may seem to oppose the Hypostatical Union, as it is called, but that is, and always was, an utterly unintelligible and unmeaning idea, presenting nothing to the imagination any more than to the senses. The idea of God we cannot fully comprehend, but we have something answering to it in our minds; and it is a deduction, in a general way, from the facts around us. But how different from that monstrous dogma of the Athanasian Creed, which errs not more in the severity of its censures than in the foolhardy daring of its definitions, and stands, curse-throned, on Presumption, Cruelty, and Blasphemy, like a usurper's dominion based on terror and tyranny, and the Curse like a thunder-cloud, though it darts down fire below, radiates no light above!

A reviewer speaks as if the great question lay between free-will and necessity—necessity leading to pantheism, and free-will to theism. But whatever free-will in man be, real or apparent,

“The clattering of the golden reins which guide
The thunder-footed coursers of the Sun,”

it is certainly an immensely different thing from the Divine Will, which cannot err. It may be said that free-will cannot be the product of blind necessity, but it may be said also that neither can necessity be the product of free-will. It is an insoluble

mystery that free-will or intelligence should spring from non-intelligence ; but so are many other things which, without understanding, we must believe. And since it was through free-will that sin entered, that it (free-will) should have proceeded from an intelligent Divine mind becomes a more confounding puzzle still. The extremes of Pantheism and Calvinism are not, as we saw before, at all unlike, and thinkers of a certain consecutive and thorough-going class pass easily from the one to the other. The middle way seems better, but is not quite satisfactory or ultimate ; it is only a precarious raft between two raging seas.

It is probably the earth-likeness of Calvinism and Pessimism that makes them so popular. They seem true to the present state of things, true to the truth of appearance as it has always been on the *whole*, it is only now and then that the Seer has the impression given partly in little hints from the surface, like a white hand, or bird of calm, or other signal appearing 'mid the black turmoil of the heaving deep ; partly from above, as if from glimpses of higher truth, like far-blue sky over the rolling clouds, and hope of a nobler destiny for man, and a fuller, milder development of God ; and then the dark billows close in again, and the clouds gather over the prospect more gloomily than before, and he shrinks back, and is content to hold the creed of

the majority, and to strive to believe it divine and good.

THE IDEA OF INFINITY WITHIN THE SOUL OF MAN.

There is evidence of the existence of the Infinite in the idea and feeling of the Infinite. This, like the sense of duty and its infinitude, is a species of infinitude within the soul of man, testifying to grand spiritual realities existing somewhere. I may compare the real though dim language of this testimony to that which the sound of the sea-shell bears to the existence of the deep, as—

“Pleased it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.”

This is partly an intuition in the soul, and partly a feeling in the heart. Logic cannot reach it, nor can logic resist it. The argument from design to some extent confirms, but has not created it. It cannot demonstrate the existence of a God; it only feels that He is, and is a Father. This feeling is deeply reverent as well as loving. Yet it has at times its lofty and even its scornful moods. When Paley points to the ladder of Design, with its thousand rounds, many of them broken, and the top wrapped in darkness, it replies, “I need no ladder, I have wings, and I can soar aloft to the empyrean!”

When Leibnitz sophistically seeks to prove this the best of all possible worlds, the heart answers, "No ! it falls far below even my poor ideal, and how much more below that of my Heavenly Father !" It is a strong Samson-like spirit this, and can rend both green withes and cart-ropes like rags in sunder. It has its secret thoughts and hopes, as well as its avowed beliefs and expectations, thoughts and hopes as yet only struggling in embryo, and scarcely able to articulate.

" A little whisper breathing low,
I may not speak of what I know."

It loves Nature well, and although it has not derived all its notions of infinite power, love, goodness, and beauty from her ancient and venerable shows, it loves to see them illustrated and rekindled by natural forms, loves to transfer the idea of God's power to the sound of the thunder, and thus to spiritualise and deepen the harmony of that voice of elemental uproar ; loves to find an image of eternal love and goodness in the serene smiles of the autumn evening, and in the golden tints of autumn woods ; and to spread the mantle of its own, and of God's sense of beauty over the sparkling stars of the evening, and the diamond dust of the Milky Way !

The author of "Festus" has a very large share of the hopeful and fidianistic spirit I have been describing. He is so firmly persuaded that sin and

evil are to be turned into good, that he sees them already with their transfiguration robes about them ; he beholds in the dark seed the bright consummate flower, which is to spring from it, already expanded, and around the clammy corpse, to his anointed eye, the wings of the Resurrection-body are already fluttering on the heavenly breeze ! He is as certain of the breaking of the last great morning of universal restoration as the old prophets were of the first advent.

POSITIVISM.

Read review in the *Scotsman* by W. His theory is that there is nothing in the universe but force and God. His reviewer puts in a plea for some unimaginable *tertium quid* called Matter, in which force may be localised, but *de non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio* ; if we cannot conceive of this substratum, can it exist ? Some things, indeed, that do not appear can be demonstrated to exist, but I doubt if this be one of them ; and if there be no such intermediate substance, then the universe is a vast congeries of conflicting or combining currents of force all set in motion, regulated, harmonised, and kept in play

by that immeasurable mind, soul, energy, or purpose we personify into God. So that, properly speaking, there is no screen between us and the living blaze of Deity, no sheath to that fiery sword! Goethe speaks of Nature as the "garment we see God by;" but, according to this writer, God and the garment are one, God's works and the worker are indissoluble, for the works and the worker are alike invisible, immortal, eternal! We do indeed see something, but that something is illusion; it is not what it seems, it is a dream not representing but simply suggesting reality. Does it then follow that God and force are one? Yes! in other words, God is divine force, and that is all we ever probably shall know about Him as to His essence. Faraday, as we saw, seems to have held this.

Have since got and read W.'s book. It is ingenious and singularly clear, but will leave the mystery very much where it found it. One is sometimes tempted to think the human mind a refinement of matter, from its limitations, its weakness, and its want of progress in certain directions for innumerable ages. For this its confinement in matter won't wholly account. W., in dissolving and denying matter, might perhaps be pushed a little further, and made to deny individual mind. To him God engulfs all matter; why not all mind too?

Matter appears a solid reality, but is only a congeries of forces; so it might be argued, and has been argued, man seems a voluntary and irresponsible agent, and is only a wave in the great ocean of God. We may be deceived about ourselves, but superior beings may see us in our true light, just as anointed spiritual eyes might behold, not form or colour, but the strong and terrible currents of force fluctuating below and within them. W.'s reasoning about the resurrection and the spiritual body is very problematical.

It is difficult to deny that man is the synthesis of body and brain with that unspeakable power or mystery called Life, which is in all things more or less, but in him takes the moral and intellectual form; and as difficult to doubt that the organism was fashioned by the life, and not the life by the organism. But one class of thinkers hold that God put an individual entity called the Soul into the organism, while another maintains that the organism is inhabited, in the form or modification we call Soul, by the general life which at death forsakes it on the usual plan of the decomposition of forces. This second theory is much more probable, in a natural view, than the former; and would be generally held but for early tradition or revelation. So profoundly, however, has this tradition been credited, and so long, that it is difficult to conceive

it being ever altogether disbelieved ; the more so as demonstration on the other side seems impossible. The traditionary doctrine might be demonstrated by the return of a spirit from the dead, or by the second advent and resurrection ; but the other view can never in its nature be proved beyond contradiction, although, were a vast number of ages passing away and no second advent occurring, and no authentic supernaturalism appearing, its probability would be greatly increased. Death obviously, without resurrection, can at most only convince those who have died, but dying return not. Death, if it be annihilation, can never be known as such, so that thus the problem *may* never be thoroughly solved.

V. has been lecturing on Positivism, ably I presume, although only meagre accounts are given in the newspapers. So far as Positivism dogmatizes down all other modes of thought, it is wrong ; but so far as it describes a process going on in the human mind, a kind of *reductio ad necessitatem* to which our abortive metaphysics and obsolete theologies are leading us, there may be in it a degree both of truth and usefulness. The best, perhaps the only, answer to Positivism were a thorough philosophy and a sifted sublimated religion. Till that come, many thoughtful men will be glad to

reach, and rest on some *terra firma*, though it were only the cold crag of Positivism. Positivism sticks to what it sees, knows, and can demonstrate, and is content with the superficies of things, because the abysses are concealed or peopled with phantoms. V. and others will point to the intuitions of the human mind, reaching toward the things invisible ; but so long as they only reach and grasp shadows, they can only prove ambitions and aspirations to exist in the human mind, but not that these have counterparts in real existence. It is possible that a verified philosophy of the human mind may arrive, and if it deny this possibility, Positivism probably errs, but not in continuing its researches, while ignoring totally the present confused and contradictory theories which have not life enough in them to invite death, but which continue to fight and fluctuate as in the battles and games of ghosts. The supremacy of science in the present age secures the temporary triumph of Positivism. May the Newton of a new and comprehensive philosophy soon arrive ! He would be John the Baptist to the Christ of the future.

V. says that Positivism ignores all experience except in a particular direction ; forgetting that the existence of æsthetic, moral, and religious emotions is as much an integral part of humanity as the ability to grasp the facts of science ; but I don't

well see how this follows. Positivism says that as the result of centuries of experience, while philosophy has not got much further than *terms*, and religion continues an emotion without much philosophic basis, or else a self-asserting and self-contained dogma, science has progressed in a hundred directions, established much that is demonstrative, and secured a firm ground for future investigations. Although a certain power be an integral part of humanity, this does not prove that it answers to something out of humanity, or beyond the material universe. And then there are difficulties as to how integral these parts of humanity are, the more so as we now find nations without any belief in God or hope of immortality.¹ As to Positivism teaching us only an "unknown God," so does religion. It teaches us to adore One who hideth himself, and is for ever unsearchable. Positivism, with some at least, teaches an unknown and mighty cause or background of being, and renders it probable that that cause is good. Religion and the popular philosophy go little further at present. When they do, and have sufficient reason for doing so, then they may get completely ahead of Positivism, but not till then. So that there may be a word said even for Positivism, although it is only a provisional theory at the best.

¹ This, however, Max Müller denies.

Note.—As a *per contra* to these remarks, let me quote the following rather amusing Creed of a Positivist (written by a friend of mine) which appeared in a forgotten book many years ago:—

“He believes that there may be a God or may not, according to circumstances, and that till the discoveries of the next ten thousand or twenty thousand years have cast a little more light on the subject he thinks it best and *safest* to suspend his judgment. He thinks that if there is a God, it is very likely that He is tolerably benevolent, and yet it is very likely, too, that He is a demon, and till he has further evidence he would rather pass the question. As to man’s soul, the probabilities are, on the whole, decidedly against the existence of such a strange, unseen, abnormal substance; and he is inclined to think that the belief in souls will follow the belief in ghosts into limbo. He has heard brave things about ‘intuitions, impressions of immortality,’ etc., but has never felt them himself, and can hardly credit their reality. He has read much in poetry, novels, and sermons, about man having a heart, but really has found so little of that in himself, his acquaintances, and in history, not to speak of the difficulty about the organ of such a supposed part of man’s structure, which is evidently neither what anatomists call the heart, nor what phrenologists call the brain, that he

is tempted to doubt its existence, unless indeed it be sought for in the liver of some men, and in the midriff of others. As to Christianity, he would be compelled, were he a juryman on its trial between the force of external and internal evidence, to say, 'Probably proven;' but then how shocking to all the laws of induction those curious doctrines connected with it,—the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Divinity of Christ! As to miracles, there seems also strong evidence in favour of some of them; but how singular that none have been wrought since the era of the Baconian philosophy; now he suspects Mr. Lewes in his *Leader* would make short work of any new pretensions of the kind. With regard to conscience and the sense of duty, he has read much eloquent writing in Kant, Thomas Brown, and others, but really is not quite sure whether he himself has a conscience or not. A future state seems to him very desirable for those who have not been successful in life, nor improved their opportunities of snatching as much positive enjoyment, positive self or power, as they could get; but he sees no evidence for it in the works of Nature, and no great use for it in the case of the human family at large,—thinks that especially if attended with much punishment it would be found very inconvenient for many intelligent and highly respectable individuals, including not a few Positivists; and as

for himself, he rather fears as well as doubts such a state, and is disposed to think that the best thing for him and others would be to let bygones be bygones, and to get, if they can, a quiet eternal nap in the mother's womb from whence they were taken. He does not, for his part, much fancy either the flames of hell, or the diamond pavements and golden streets of the New Jerusalem. He has loved; got a good deal of pleasure; a little money, and, thanks to the *Leader* and M. Comte, has got rid of the absurd dogmas of his parents, and is quite content to lie down and enjoy

“‘Silence and dreamless rest for evermore!’”

C. had a sermon to-day with some good points. He says that the spirit of Christianity is the essence of it, and independent of creeds. But he does not see, or at least say, that the spirit and life of Christianity are found in all religions; that they are to a great extent independent of any religion, being, in fact, the work of God in the soul of man. No doubt there is more of this in Christianity, because it implies a higher spiritual culture—it is the best religion, but it is the best not as an exclusively divine thing, but as containing in fuller measure the diviner and better elements of all religions, while all religions are just divine and spiritual in man touched from above,

finding a vent, and shaping for themselves a form. To these views intelligent men are coming gradually and certainly; but after they have come, the result may be in a great degree negative. The mystery and the uncertainty of this "unintelligible world" may remain even after we have got a more perfect philosophy and a milder Christianity, and its ultimate problems may be seen like black marble mountains from which you have cleared away the brushwood, and which you find standing there impenetrable and unsurmountable as before and for ever!—I refer, of course, to this world.

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE GOSPEL.

S. D. was speaking of the simplicity of the Gospel. I said that was more apparent than real. The simplest Gospel formula involves the profoundest mysteries and the most formidable difficulties. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Analyse this. "God."—Who and what is He? "Loved the world." What means the world? Is it the whole world, or only a portion? "His Son." Who is He—equal or inferior to the Father? Here a mighty controversy diverges. "Believeth."

What is belief? Intellectual conviction or moral trust? Produced by a supernatural power, or the exercise of our own faculties? "Gave His Son" to death. What was the nature of that death? Was it vicarious or not? "Perish." What is perishing? Is it everlastingly, or for a limited period? Still I value simple Gospel statements as furnishing to those who already believe, in short hand, the results of that highest and best philosophy which implies that the fountain of the universe is love, and that its history is to issue in a milder, better day.

There seems at times little hope for the race, except in a miraculous interposition, and that seems very improbable. The lower ranks are for the most part determined slaves of the senses; many of them coarse, vulgar, and heartless; and those above them are not acting on them with the good effect they ought. What a contrast I have sometimes marked in a city between the pleasure-lusting crowds pouring along and the divine sky above them, like some gorgeous canopy erected over a company of the blind! Some one was lately saying that it is the doctrine of eternal punishment which is the great cause of the scepticism and Pantheism of the age. Better no God and no immortality than an eternal torture and torturer. And how little hope of getting at more light and certainty on the subject than we have! All the footsteps at the mouth of the grim

cave are of those going in; none, now at least, of any returning. Yet the strangeness of the matter lies in the undeniable fact, that man is such a wonderful and, in some points, glorious being. I know not if the history of all worlds furnishes any parallel to that of the human family cast naked on the inhospitable shores of earth, resisted in their progress by so many of the forces of nature, or encumbered in it by their own passions and sins, and yet shaping out for themselves, aided no doubt by gleams and moments of supernatural light, a brilliant destiny—subduing the elements, fertilising the earth, bridling and bridging the ocean, building the proudest structures, making the most important discoveries, writing the noblest books, delivering themselves from many of their evils and mitigating others, often falling, but always rising again, and continuing to struggle on toward some great goal in the future, a belief in which is the inspiration of all their efforts and the solace of all their woes. This, however, is true more of the race than of the individual man.

We can hardly, in fact, at present conceive how any one can be happy in heaven *at first*. No doubt the presence of long-lost friends there will contribute to enliven and cheer. But what of the absence of others? What of the absence of so many of the human race? What of the consciousness that so

many are being tormented elsewhere, or even, if not tormented, deprived of so much joy, or perhaps annihilated? These are thoughts which make us cling convulsively to a life we otherwise would loathe, and be ready to change as a vesture. Few can, like Paul, feel in the presence of Christ a substitute for everything and every person on earth, and say, "To be with Christ is far better."

Note.—Thus says a writer commenting on the words, *The door was shut*:—"These words seem very simple, but there is a certain awful ring in them. You think of the door of the city of refuge shut in the face of the poor fugitive who has arrived too late to find shelter there; or you think of an angry father driving out a rebellious and incorrigible son from his house; he breathes no anathema, he utters no word, but does not that shutting of the door speak unutterable things to the woods and the stars, and convey to the son's heart the echo and essence of a thousand curses? Does it not say, 'Away to the bleak mountains, to the barren sands, to the wolves, to the winds—away anywhere, everywhere, but never darken that door again'?"

"But might not this door open to entreaty? Might not the agonising cry of those shut out make it turn upon its hinges and melt its bars and bolts in sunder? Surely the Son of the Blessed is very pitiful. But mark the close of the parable. The

feast is moving on right joyously when there comes a sound to the door. Sounds from without often add to the harmony and gladness of a festival. The whistling of the excluded wind and the raving of the homeless rain often tend, by the power of contrast, to swell the sweetness of the feelings of those who are safe within. Even the fierce outcries of envy and disappointment do not materially disturb the general joy of the social table. But suppose a voice of submissive wretchedness, the cry of a poor starving, although worthless, wanderer, seeking in merely to avoid the storm, and to eat of the refuse and crumbs of the entertainment, would not *that* be granted? Or suppose the suppliant too late, although late by his own fault, shall not a point be stretched, and he be admitted? Faugh! think of what a darkness is in that midnight, what a storm in that sky! Might not, such a night, dogs, wolves, demons almost, be admitted, not to speak of children and belated virgins? Can the guests within, can the lord of the feast himself, be perfectly happy while the cry without is so piercing and so plaintive, 'Lord, lord, open to us'? So nature might and does argue, and to its arguments there is and can be no reply."

I was much impressed by a sentence in a letter of Shelley's written shortly before his death. Talking

in Spezia of the boat he used, he says: "We drive along this delightful bay in the evening wind under the summer moon until earth appears *another world*." This unearthly aspect given to the world by moonlight he alludes to in some other parts of his poetry:—"Where the moonbeam poured a holier day." It is partly no doubt the effect of imagination, but not altogether. May there not be some world where the moon rules by day—is the sole luminary? At present what a torch of enchantment she is, held in the hand of the great magician Night! How all things dwindle and beautify, and assume fairy forms at her touch. What a charm of secrecy and mystery she creates! What a spirit of love—languid, luxurious love; the love of happy dreams is shed abroad! How we recognise too the light of the dream-world in her soft, bewitching, evasive lustre! How faces become in moonlight small sweet pictures of themselves! With what a sister-like tenderness does the moon close for a little the wearied and watchful eyes of the stars, folding over them her silken mantle! How you exclaim while the illusion lasts—for alas! it soon passes away,—“O happy earth, reality of Heaven, or if it be a dream let us never awake.” Shelley adds to his former sentence: “If the past and the future could be obliterated the present would content me so well, that I could say with Faust to the passing moment: ‘Remain thou, thou art so beautiful.’”

In a letter to Browning, Leigh Hunt develops a creed of his, approaching one I used to dally with, and try to hold. It is to this effect, that God is the unmingled, wholly benevolent, and common spirit of good, working through his agent man ; that evil, where it is evil and not a necessary portion of good (as it probably is ultimately), is the difficulty presented to the course of this working by the unconscious, involuntary, and therefore unmalignant mystery called matter ; that God, though not immediately nor in all stages of His processes almighty, is ultimately so, and that His constant occupation is the working out of Heavens—the final conscious beatitude of all the souls that ever have existed. There are difficulties in this theory, of course, but it is on the whole a glorious one ! Mrs. Browning had written Hunt, asserting her belief in the absolute Deity of Christ ; on this Hunt does not touch, but he would not I suppose have denied His relative Divinity and present supremacy in the sky of our thought, whatever might be His view of Him as absolutely and eternally Divine. In the Bible as on a level with Nature or with Man (collective) as revelations of God he evidently does not believe. He, or at all events Mrs. Browning, probably valued the Bible chiefly as the pedestal of Christ, a conglomerate mass of manifold materials, sustaining the statue of the Divine-human man, who is also the mirror

of God. I think Coleridge, Foster, and various others of the great Christian thinkers of the day hold the same view substantially with Hunt, nor does Bailey of "Festus" differ materially.

How many people speak of their belief as a very important matter! "We firmly believe so-and-so." "Good people," I am sometimes tempted to exclaim, "what is it to us whether you believe this or that? Can your belief alter facts, change realities, make one of your hairs white or black? Besides, how much pains have you taken to ground your belief well, to form it for yourselves? How much of it is hearsay, or tradition, or prejudice, or even sometimes hereditary spite! What you *do* is a more important question." But even doing ever so well is not a voucher for the truth of belief, only for its sincerity and strength; nay, excellent conduct is often found where there is no belief whatever, or belief which is manifestly wrong. The best parts of conduct after all spring from the instincts and the heart—the God within us.

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